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CÆSURA

FALL 1962

CÆSURA

CÆSURA

The Literary Magazine

Of The University Of Massachusetts

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THE ASSASSINATORS

by Eve Silberstein

Assassinator . . . That was the word that had been sounding around in Janie's head since last night. She didn't know what it meant, but it sounded foreign, far away, on tiptoe. Janie had heard it last night when her father came out to cool off after supper. He stood talking to Mrs. Draper on the sidewalk in front of the empty lot, and Janie walked around them or stood next to her father, listening to voices. She didn't know what they were talking about, but that one word, assassinators, was clear amid the haze of conversation.

This morning, it was the third day of summer vacation, Janie lounged in bed looking at the assassinators in the repeated and repeated tiny flower design on the wallpaper. *Assassinators* was the wind in a dream, the wind that pushed so hard you couldn't run forward. It was a far country that smelled like the bronze Chinese gods sitting cross-legged with bare bellies in front of the museum.

"Janie, this is the last time I'm going to tell you to get up!" called her mother from the kitchen. Janie threw the summer comforter aside, stood up on the bed, and jumped down to the floor, remembering to do a deep-knee-bend landing, as her father had taught her. She slid, her feet half in slippers, squashing down the heels, over to the window and looked down to the empty lot next door. It was thick and green with weeds, a bug-catching paradise. You could feel so floaty down there and run and whirl around like a horse. Today the empty lot was humid like a rich jungle. Every grasshopper collected assassinators on its wings when it jumped. Over at the fence by Mrs. Draper's yard was an assassinator butterfly, light yellow, that flew as soft as the hair of a milkweed pod.

"Now hurry up and get dressed; you'll never get outside if you stand by the window again this morning!"

"I *am* hurrying, Mommy," called Janie. She slid along into the bathroom, twisting a long string of dark brown hair around her finger in concentration. First she turned her parents' toothbrushes hanging in the rack with hers, to face in to the wall. That way they were visiting the sick person who was lying getting better on the inside of the rack. It took her twenty minutes to wash and to inspect her teeth as she brushed them. A new, thick one was getting loose. She quickly brushed through her hair

a few times when her mother called again, and then she slid back into the room to dress. The window, and the jungle, and Mrs. Pava and the baby took up fifteen minutes more as she dressed in a few play clothes. Janie posed at her full length mirror for a few minutes, first as a boy and then as a girl. She could be tough and she could be very glamorous. Finally she was ready for breakfast. She sat at the kitchen table and ate a little bread, a little scrambled egg, and then concentrated on bunching the egg up very closely so it would look as if there were only tiny left-overs.

"Drink some milk too, Janie." So she took a few big gulps, got up and quickly kissed her mother. "Bye, Mommy." Janie went down the steps by holding on to the banister railings with both hands, hunching her body weight up on her straight arms and jumping down, one by one by one. Only Carey was out front, just now, sitting making lines with a pebble in the grassless tree belt.

"Com'on, Carey. You'd better look out today because a lot of assassinators are coming around and inspecting the street."

"What're they?" asked Carey with nothing-else-to-do interest.

"Oh, I don't know. You know, maybe like that man from Turkey or something."

"Oh yuh, that man. Y'know my brother told my mother that a man from Chicken came to visit our class. He's stupid."

"Com'on, we can play that the assassinators are coming and we've got to prepare."

Carey made a final swipe in the dirt with her pebble. Then she slowly got up and walked with Janie into the long grass of the empty lot. They took slow steps, planning the first part of the action. Bugs jumped up around their legs as they walked; Janie and Carey bumped sideways into each other as they talked. They got to the middle of the lot and crouched down so the weeds were almost up to their faces.

"Now pretend this is a jungle," said Janie, "and we just live here and eat bananas and coconuts, and there's the pool where we swim. And we . . . . it's sort of a farm-jungle . . . we take care of the animals and things and make sure too many visitors don't extinct the animals of anything."

"Okay, and we have cots to rest on out there in the shade when it gets too hot."

"Yuh, and first we got to make sure the animals get enough fodder to eat."

Janie got up and started pulling up on the grain pods of the weeds

so the seeds came off and left bare, hairy-looking stalks. She and Carey walked along gathering fodder in both hands. Then they swung around, throwing small amounts of grain at a time up in the air so that it spread out for the animals in the jungle.

"Com'on, get your food! Com'on!" called Janie to the animals. "This is a new kind. They just got a car-load of it this morning. You don't need as much of it as the other stuff because it's more filling," she told Carey.

"Yuh, and it's summer so the animals can get a lot of their food from the trees. It's very hot now, make believe, so we have to go swimming."

"Okay, but somebody has to look out for the assassinators."

"We both can. We'll watch while we're swimming. They can only get in one way . . ."

"Yes, but sometimes they make themselves real small so you can't hardly see them. They make a ring." Janie made a wide circle with her whole arm. "Or sometimes they creep along under the grass so you can just tell they're coming when the grass moves."

"But big things are much worse than little things."

"No sir, when you can't see them you don't know what they're like. And then they're worse. They can make themselves almost invisible and they can come up through ant holes." The last was told in a secret, hoarse whisper.

"But we can go swimming for a while because they're on the road; they're still traveling," said Carey, starting to walk to the back corner of the empty lot where higher green bushes made a shady patch.

"Okay." Janie and Carey ran eagerly to the shade pool and changed, in fast pantomime, into bathing suits. Janie tested the water with her toe, sat at the edge of the pool and slid into the cool imaginary water. Carey jumped in.

"Hey you splashed me!" She pushed the water back at Carey with a vigorous swoosh. "Hey!" And they splashed and ran and rolled and giggled and felt very cool. They squinted their eyes when a gust of make-believe water got into their faces; they ducked and wriggled under each others' legs, and floated on their backs when they were out of breath.

"Sometimes when we go to the beach a lot I can stay under *so long*. I can almost breathe under water," said Carey happily.

"Yuh, and then you feel like a fish and just come up a little. You can be like a whale and stay under a long time and come up slow, just once in a while. You don't feel like you're going to bust." And they swam under water, and breathed very slightly, and had the power of fishes.

Janie swam to the edge of the pool to look around. "Maybe we better inspect to see if everything's okay, Carey." Carey climbed out of the pool and followed Janie, on tiptoe, spy style. Stop. Listen. Continue. Shhh. Look closely at the grass. Quickly look behind. Tiptoe ahead. Shhhh. Wait. A grasshopper rattle. "Hey! Run, Carey! Over here! Quick! Run! They're here! Carey, I hear them! What can we do? Com'ere!"

They crouched in the corner against the house and the fence, breathless. Janie held Carey by the shoulders. Both of their faces were wildly looking all around. They held very still and whispered together. A muffled plane motor droned toward the house.

"They're coming under the grass. Every grass that moves is a fort." The plane rumbled louder, closer and Janie and Carey heard it. They turned their heads upward and twisted their faces around to try to see it.

"I can't see it!" said Janie. Then suddenly the roar became too loud. Invisible, somewhere up there it cracked and jolted the air. Janie and Carey sat crouched down, their eyes tightly shut. Janie's fingers clamped into Carey's shoulders. Carey held her head down, her hands tightly pressed against her ears. They felt the habitual terror as the sound shook their skulls. Slowly, gradually, the cracking, drilling noise lessened. Janie and Carey's tensions loosened. Cautiously they stood up.

"That must have been a big one. I can't see it."

"Carey! No! That was the assassinator's trumpets!"

"Yah! That's right! Lookit the grass! They're almost here!"

"What can we do?" They breathed together with heavy anxiety.

A shout, "Carey, hold up your jungle sign! That's it! Hold it up high!"

They both desperately stretched their arms high up in the air, leaning forward, showing their signs with hoping, excited, wide eyes.

"Yes, it's working!" Joyfully they jumped up and down holding their signs higher and higher. "They're getting bigger, Carey! They're getting bigger! They understand our signs! Yea! They're getting to be people! YEA! They watched the assassinators grow and jumped up and down like two lost sailors on a desert island.

"Janie! Come in for lunch," a mother voice reached the over-joyed jungle keepers.

Janie and Carey stopped jumping. "Okay, Ma!" They began to wade slowly through the empty lot, hitting the high weeds with the backs of their hands as they walked. "Lookit, Carey. Pretend you just tell them the huts they can use till we can make houses. And then we'll tell them about the jungle after when I come out." They walked out of the empty lot and down the sidewalk to go to lunch.

EVERY WORD

Robin Skelton

Poet Robin Skelton, on leave from Manchester University (England), is Centennial Lecturer of English Literature for the first semester.

Every word is a
love-word spoken
under the fluttering
breath of leaves
or the water-drop
of the sun flashed bright
by light from
God knows where

And no matter
who listens or does not
every word is the
pulling of a heart
nearer heart upon heart
in a doublebeat
of the waiting darkness
when the drop
has fallen

as the leaves fall
until every word
is a love-word cradling
the shining boughs
that bend, curve
under cold,
and cannot lift
ever again,
stay crouched,
shaken, through Spring.

Amherst, October 1962

(untitled)

David Axelrod

Rain in the leaves,
Sleeking lines through dust greens;
Hanging loftily, awaiting a passer
On whose hat they light.
Dropped with a wet grin by gentle
breezes,
Then crashed to the ground
When hat-brim sneezes.

BIG TOWN
(A Jazz Canto)

Charles Dean

Madison Avenue, five miles of deals and wheels,
An ulcer alley in reinforced concrete.
The sky? The sky is as high as Dow Jones
And man is the sum of his advertisements.

Before the aluminum shadows of contemporary penance
The first sun was blasted out of chaos
And sent spinning in the dark sinews of the Cosmos,
An infinity before the Union-Pacific made impotent imitations
Of the eternal libido.

See, the staccato sky exists between smog
And the electrical expanse of Radio City.
Its altitude is governed by the infamous ratio of sales and wages;
Love is a give-and-take proposition on Channel Five.
It unfolds over the Red, White and Blue subliminal sales pitch
Of the House of Sarnoff.

Here the perverse genius of creativity conceived in steel
An immense erection to genuflect the one man — You!
Here the wind once played a flute song to a white stag
Under a pale sky,
Before the Morgan Cartel.

Do you understand you are not alone
I have done penance in Times Square
    I have confessed my capitulations to a long-distance telephone
        operator.
        The words of that conversation echo dolefully in a wilderness of
            unemployed circuits.

The clocks mark time in steel.
    Rain beats a tearless tattoo on tin roofs.
        The end is coming

Look up! Do you see the sky?
Can you see the storm cloud wheel and fly
    And hear the thunder's resonant cry?

A wild strong song swept by the freshening gale
    Before a slant and echoing rain.

But the last leaves rattle drily
The last long winter is a white ghost stalking out impertinance
For DHARMA is a straight ribbon of road
    That fades bravely into
                Darkness.
    but man creates his own
                confusion . . .

JOE

by Sam Gorvine

At five thirty Friday afternoon we pull into a little parking garage a couple of blocks from Madison Square Garden. "We" is Joe Kane, Eliot, Bromberg, and me, Sam. Not Sammy; Sam. I hate when people call me Sammy, especially broads. My mother calls me Sammy, but she thinks I'm an innocent little angel, and I'm twenty years old. Isn't that amazing? Even that time when she was doing my laundry and she found lipstick on my underwear, she refused to think the worst. I would have given anything to see her face when she found it.

Now where were we? Oh yes, we were pulling into the garage. Well, this weekend, me, Eliot and Joe decided to take a couple days off from the University and run down to New York to blow off some steam. So we hops in Joe's old fifty-three Ford a little before one, and here we are after being lost only twice.

None of us has ever been to New York before but we've been coached by a pro. Smitty has a girl who works on Park Avenue near seventy-seventh as a cook or maid or something. Anyway he comes down every so often to shack up with her and eat steaks out of her boss's freezer. So, he knows New York pretty good and we got a thorough briefing before we left.

He told us all about not driving the car after we got there because it's worse than Boston for parking. There would be a lot of Ass in the lounge of the Taft Hotel, he said, if we wanted to spend that kind of money for drinks, etc. The Belvediere, next to the Garden had fair rooms for the money, and we wouldn't be spending much time there anyway. Stay away from Spanish Harlem unless we were tired of living and never leave our room unlocked.

The sign over the entrance of the garage says "Park All Day . . . $1.80"; we plan to leave the next day about four, so Joe gets out to try and make a deal. He starts to talk to the guy, but the guy looks at our Massachusetts license plate and says "Four bills, buddy."

Let me tell you about Joe. He's about six foot one, and a little over two hundred pounds of muscle and fat in about equal proportions. He has a round somewhat pleasant face, not unattractive to women, but he's

shy and says so. His happy-go-lucky exterior is deceiving, but he is really a serious person, and lonely, too, I think, but you can never be sure of anything with him. He is sharp with money, bargains like an Arab and plays poker like Maverick. Once, when I had lost all my money in a card game and had a date that weekend, he bought my electric alarm clock and desk lamp for three-fifty. I don't tell anybody about that because I'm a Jew. It's not good for my reputation to be taken that way by a Protestant.

So, anyway, you can imagine Joe's face when that guy said four bucks.

"Four bucks??" Joe says, his voice almost reaching high C on the last syllable.

"Four dollars to park here for a day? Why it's damp and dark here, and my car is used to sunlight and fresh air (with a straight face mind you!). It's an outrage!"

But the guy just looks him in the eye and says, "That's the price, buddy; do me something."

Ordinarily, Joe would spend half an hour arguing with a guy like this, but he's in a hurry to get out on the town and knock off a Piece, so he shuts his mouth and pays the man.

So we park the car upstairs and pick up our luggage on the way out. We all have our suits slung on hangers over our shoulders, and Joe and Eliot have a suitcase each while I have a Marine Corps duffle bag which I carry to impress people. On the way out Joe puts on this HAT which looks like it came off a Bowery bum or a peanut vendor, and Eliot says it makes him look like a native New Yorker. We had decided, against Smitty's advice, to try a room at the Taft, so on our way there, we pass some colored shoeshine boys. As Joe passes, one of them says loudly, "Some po' hoss jus' had his hat stole!" Eliot laughs so hard over this that he drops his suit.

Eliot. I don't really know him too well; not like I know Joe, who's my roommate. For you who read "Li'l Abner", Eliot is shaped something like a shmoo. For those who don't, he has a forty-nine inch waist and a thirty inch chest. His head is shaped roughly the same way. He just recently had his nose fixed, and I caught him admiring his profile in a mirror. I asked him what the Hell he was doing, and he said he'd just had his nose fixed and how did it look? Honest, I didn't know whether to laugh or cry, but I told him it was a great improvement.

It takes us a little longer to get to the Taft because we learn on the way that you can't jaywalk in New York like you can in Boston; these people would just as soon hit you as not.

When we finally arrive, a bit shaken but alive, the place looks a little on the classy side. The clientele consists mostly of women with three or four layers of make-up and dogs (there's a dog show in town).

There are cabs pulling up right and left and guys in blue uniforms with weary faces running up to open their doors.

Well, this one broad gets out and the first thing that hits me is the menstruation RED, fuzzy coat. As she comes closer I see the bleach blond hair, and still closer the black roots. The roundness of her scarlet mouth against the creamy white of her make-up reminds me of the time I dropped a beet in a dish of lemon sherbet. She's carrying this little shit-colored dog, a Pekingese I think you call 'em—you know long hair and faces all scrunched up like they should play in the Green Bay Packer line.

Well, she's nuzzling the thing like they were on their honeymoon, and cooing to it, yet. I can see by Joe's face that he wishes he was that dog. She struts through the tremendous revolving doors into the plush lobby. Joe and I watch her. She gets in one of the huge elevators, the doors close and the little light begins its long climb along the numbers above the doors.

Joe takes a few steps back from the building and looks up at the endless columns of windows climbing smaller and smaller out of sight. Then he turns around and looks at the other walls of grey concrete, and seems to be counting the windows that even now are starting to blaze with light against the darkening sky. Then, as though bewildered, to look at the crush of cars and garish taxies filling the whole street as far as the eye can see. When I see his face again, there is a trace of a scowl.

"Big place," he says.

We look like we're just in from East Overshoe or someplace so I tell Eliot to go in and ask how much for a triple for the night . . . "It can't be more than twelve or fifteen bucks, Eliot, go on in and pay the check."

Well, Eliot goes in through the revolving doors and comes out a few minutes later with this stunned expression on his face.

"Well, how much?" I asks.

"Forget it," he says.

"Best we go to the Belvediere," says Joe.

When we get there we leave Eliot and our stuff in the bar and walk down a long corridor to the lobby. The lobby is simple: opposite the street door a desk with pigeonholes behind it and two long couches back to back across from three elevators.

"How much for a double for the night?" Joe asks the man bent over the desk who looks a little like Uriah Heap.

"I think we have a nice room for you and your wife," says the man rubbing his hands together.

"I'm not married," Joe says, looking for trouble. "How much?"

"That's nine-fifty. I hope you and your wife enjoy your stay," as though he hadn't heard.

"It's for me and him," Joe says, pointing at me. I smile.

"Seven-fourteen," the man says, giving the key to a bellhop who looks about fifty. We all go up to the room with the bellhop. There are twin beds with the Lord's Prayer in Gothic print over one, and the hotel rules over the other. There is only one big dresser and two coffin-sized closets. It isn't bad except for the enormous "V" from the BELVEDIERE sign flashing right outside the window.

"I think he put us in this room just to taunt us," Eliot says, looking at the flashing red "V".

"Naw, he's not that subtle," Joe says, like he's not sure.

We change into our suits and leave the hotel without even unpacking, and walk the few blocks to Forty-second Street. Standing there, I am momentarily dazzled by the maze of climbing, crossing, and flashing lights. There seem to be more lights and more people here than in any other spot on Earth. We walk deeper into the Square, each of us unaware of the others, seeing and feeling the unique personality of Times Square.

People rush by us every which way; hundreds, thousands of them. All their faces, inscrutable, reflect the flashing lights. We stop to laugh at the sign with the picture of the man with the impossibly round mouth blowing real smoke rings, and gawk at the titles of records which would cause heart failures if displayed in Massachusetts.

"Look at all the Ass," Joe grins, watching a particularly delectable specimen.

"Yeah, Joe," says Eliot. "Just reach out and grab a piece; they're going by so fast they'd probably knock you down."

"Let's eat," I says.

We are arrested by the sight of enormous steaks being charcoal broiled in a window. Once you stop to look you're dead. They have it arranged so close you can see the black stripes on the meat from the hot grate. The final blow is the price: $1.17!

The meal is served cafeteria style. I pick up my tray. There is a man with a fat face behind the counter holding a huge fork in his right hand. As the orders are given, he slings a steak onto the grate relaying the order to a compatriot who turns them and slams them onto huge platters when they're done.

We get into line; Joe first, myself second, then Eliot. The line moves fast.

"Rare," says Joe.

"Medium."

Eliot is very fussy about his food.

"Very well done on the outside and very rare inside, please. Same with the peas, please. Medium rare on the French fries though."

The guy stands there looking at him with no expression at all on his face, slowly hefting the fork. He turns slowly to the other guy and says something about a burro in Spanish.

We finally get the steaks and drinks and sit at one of the crowded tables. The steaks are good and I am almost done when Eliot picks up his steak and begins to eat it with both hands. Joe's eyes are beginning to get very large. People are beginning to nudge each other and smile. I can feel my face getting flushed.

"Eliot . . . for Chrissake!" Joe hisses, looking around as though he doesn't know him.

"I don't give a shit," Eliot says. "I paid good money for this steak and I'm gonna eat it!"

"Eliot, finish your steak; we'll meet you outside when you're done. C'mon, Sam." Joe wipes his hands on a napkin and gets up. I know what he's thinking, so I follow him out. Eliot mumbles something without looking up from his steak. Once outside we walk rapidly down Forty-second Street, losing ourselves in the crowds.

"Well, what now?" I ask.

"Let's go down to the Village," he says, "There should be some broads or something."

So we grab a cab to the Village down to about Fourth Street and get out to look for the Village Vanguard. We don't find it, so we stop in a small bar. We sit for over an hour and a half just drinking and talking. Joe surprises me. He holds his liquor well for someone who doesn't drink. He has eight Black and Whites but doesn't like scotch. You can tell because he pours them down like they were two hundred proof.

The scotch loosens him up and I begin to see more of the real Joe. He surprises me again when I see what his shyness with women has done to him. How lonely can you get so that the sight of couples walking home after a movie on a warm summer night, or lying in the sun with their hands touching, makes you angry.

It is just after eight when we finally leave. I'm all right, since I only had five screwdrivers, but Joe is a trifle unsteady and feeling sorry for himself.

"Gotta find me a piece of Ass, Sam. This is a big city, just gotta look long enough."

We walk slowly down the Avenue of the Americas. There are no big clubs down the Greenwich end of the Avenue, so it's pretty quiet. We walk along not saying much of anything when we pass a building with a light on the second floor. Joe stops and squints at the window.

"That looks like a whorehouse, Sam. Let's go up."

I squint up at the faded decals that say something about "New York Brotherhood of Democrats."

"Joe," I says laughing, "you won't get laid up there. That's Tammany Hall."

This breaks the spell of the Village and we hail a cab to go uptown.

"Let's go back to the hotel," Joe says. "We can get smashed just as good in the Hotel bar."

So we go back, and whom do we run into in the lobby but Eliot.

"Joe, you're smashed. How did that happen?"

"How the hell do you think? What did you do?"

"I went to the fights at the Garden."

This breaks me up.

"Eliot, the fight was on television, we saw it in the bar; you could have stayed in Massachusetts and seen it!" I says.

"I need a drink," Joe says.

So we adjourn to the hotel bar. Honest, they must have spent the entire hotel budget on the barroom. The actual bar is circular with a diameter of fifteen feet. The bartendresses stand in the center. The walls are mint green with fancy gold fixtures and booths all along.

That's what they have in New York, bartenderesses. The one at the Belvediere is a blond with a hard face. While we sit at the bar drinking, I watch her as a stranger buys her drinks and makes a date for twelve o'clock. I watch the way she drinks, just a tilt of the shot glass . . .

Joe sees all this too, and his loneliness becomes humanitarian. He is going to help this girl, I can see by the wistful expression on his face. Besides, he is up to eleven drinks, and at that point you either pass out or become a humanitarian.

So he calls her over on the pretext of ordering another drink.

"How long have you been in this business?" he asks like he was a missionary or something.

Well, she just looks him right in the eye and says,

"None of your goddamn business," and walks to the other side of the bar.

Joe just gets up and trundles out into the lobby with Eliot and me close behind.

"Get him up to the room quick," I says. "It's starting to really hit him."

We manage to steer him to the elevator and up to the room where we get him stripped to his shorts and into bed. He is almost asleep when he sits up suddenly, trying to force a determined look onto his face.

"That girl needs me," he proclaims. "No matter what she said. . . . I'm going down for another drink."

And so saying, he throws a sheet around him like a toga, opens the door and walks out into the hall.

"Hey, Julius Caesar! Come back!" Eliot yells, running after him. I can just see us being thrown out of the hotel if he shows up at the bar like that.

Thank God the elevator is slow and we have time to talk him back into the room. Once in, he makes a running dive on one of the beds. There is an ominous crack from below.

"You know we're leaving early tomorrow," says Eliot, giggling.

Joe sits up again with that look on his face.

"Joe," I yells, thinking fast, "You weak bastard! I bet you can't even do twenty pushups!"

The look on his face changes to one of childish hurt.

"Thasa lie . . . jus' watch!" So saying he turns over and begins.

"Count out loud, now," I says.

I got to give him credit; he made it to twelve before slumping exhausted on the bed. I can see there's no more fight left in him. He's good for the night.

I walks over to the window and looks past the glaring red of the sign down to the street below. There was never much traffic on it, and now it is almost deserted. The other side of the hotel next to the Garden is the live spot. I watch a piece of newspaper drift aimlessly under a street light.

"Sam?" It was Joe again, his voice subdued.

"Yuh."

"Why . . . why wasn't there nobody . . ." his voice trails off aimlessly, "out of so many . . ."

"I don't know, Joe. Go to sleep."

ROOM 12

by Larry Schectman

Sergeant O'Brien sat hunched over his desk, idly filling out a criminal record sheet. Every time they pulled in another drunk, he had to complete a report on him. He looked up at the clock. Nine twenty-two. The night wasn't even half over, and already he had seven forms to do. Muttering objections, he returned to his dull, mechanical labor. The steady monotonous drone of the ceiling fan, cutting slowly through the sluggish summer air, only made him more conscious of his boredom.

He heard the door click open, and the muffled sound of voices, but he didn't bother to look up. Feet scuffed swiftly across the wooden floor, and came to a halt in front of his desk. He stopped writing, but kept his eyes riveted on the paper. Somehow he couldn't bring himself to start dragging information out of another drunk. The thought irked him, and he refused to look up.

"Sarge."

He recognized Kennedy's thick gravelly voice. He gave a hard mental sigh, and decided to get it over with as soon as possible.

"Alright, what have you got for me tonight, Kennedy?"

His rising gaze passed over a pair of long thin legs, covered by dirty, faded dungarees that clung like a layer of blue skin. The broad leather of a garrison belt circled the thin waist like an ugly black ring. He went by the greasy, black leather jacket, and scanned a tilted sneering face. It was a familiar face, and out of sheer boredom he continued to stare at it. Heavy waves of black hair, held in place by thick layers of grease. Dead cold eyes watching him complete his laconic scrutiny.

"Back so soon, Mitchell? And I thought you promised to be a good boy."

"Picked him up off Pickett Street," Kennedy grumbled.

"Pickett Street, eh," O'Brien replied. "What was he doing?"

"Standing around. Across from Sherman's Drug Store."

"Well, now, isn't that interesting. Tell me, Mitch, what were you standing around there for?"

The youth hooked one thumb over his belt, and rubbed the light three day growth of black stubble on his chin with his free hand.

"Nothin'," he grunted.

"I didn't hear you, Mitch," replied O'Brien, shaking his head and smiling. The smile faded. "What were you doing?"

The surly, twisted lips mouthed no answer. O'Brien wiped the droplets of sweat from his upper lip with the back of his hand, then wiped his hand on his pants. He reached over and pressed one of the buttons on the chipped black intercom.

"Waters, come up front and take over. I'm going out back."

He released the button and stood up.

"Alright, Kennedy, let's take him to room twelve."

They walked through a nearby door, O'Brien leading, and continued down a short, narrow corridor. They bypassed the rows of damp, brightly-lit cells, a few of which were occupied by the night's supply of drunkards and other one-night felons. At the end of the corridor was a wooden door, and on it, was the number 12, in golden numerals that had long since lost their last trace of lustre. O'Brien pushed the door open, and the others followed him inside.

The room was small, and there were no windows. The only furnishings consisted of a badly marred wooden desk, and a large swivel chair. A drab, wavering illumination was provided by a single overhead light. O'Brien sat down, while Kennedy and Mitchell moved in front of the desk to face him.

"So you weren't doing anything, eh, Mitch? You just happened to pick that place to stand — just for the hell of it, huh?"

There was no reply.

"And I don't suppose you know anything about what's been going on around there lately, do you?" the sergeant continued.

Again no reply.

"No, Mitchell's a good boy," he went on. "You wouldn't know anything about three attempted rapes in that vicinity in the last two weeks, would you Mitchell?"

The boy lolled his head, while his eyes shifted listlessly around the room. Still he voiced no answer. O'Brien leaned forward on his elbows and squinted at the face that defied him.

"Mitchell," he began, in a soft determined voice, "when I talk to you, you answer me."

"I already told you. I wasn't doin' nothin'. And I don't know nothin' about nobody gettin' raped."

O'Brien leaned back in his chair. "Then tell me, Mitch, what were you doing near Sherman's Drug Store?"

"I was waitin' for somebody," Mitchell answered tiredly.

"Who?" spat O'Brien.

"For a cop to walk me home. I'm afraid of the dark."

Kennedy's hand lashed out, catching Mitchell on the side of the face with a sudden slap that sent him reeling backward. Mitchell turned to face his aggressor, forcing himself to restrain his clenched fists.

"Come on, punk, swing at me," Kennedy goaded.

Mitchell slowly resumed his former relaxed position. He let one hand massage the livid red imprint on his cheek.

"Lay off him, Kennedy," O'Brien muttered. "Feel more like talking now, Mitch? What were you doing at Sherman's?"

"Waitin' for a friend."

"Who?"

"Mickey Rossi."

"What were you going to do with him?"

"Just talk to him, that's all."

"Mitch, the last time I saw you, you were picked up for following a woman around. You still doing it?"

"Na, I gave it up. I follow men around now." He smiled, and sent a furtive glance in Kennedy's direction. The patrolman grabbed his jacket with both hands and whirled him around, sending him crashing against the heavy desk where O'Brien sat. Kennedy slapped his face twice with his thickly calloused hand, then shot a stiff right fist into the boy's stomach. Mitchell doubled over and dropped to his knees, his breath coming in short wheezing gasps. He vomited, and O'Brien turned his head away in disgust.

"That's enough," commanded the sergeant. He waited until Mitchell had regained his strength and struggled back to his feet before continuing.

"Alright, Mitch. Where were you last Friday night?"

"I . . . I spent the night playin' cards with three other guys."

"You never learn, do you, Mitch? Who were they?"

"Johnny DiTomasso, and uh . . . Rossi, and uh . . ."

"Come on, who's the third?"

"Can't remember."

"You'd damn well better remember! Who was he?"

"I don't know." He paused. "Oh, yeah, Dick Feldano."

O'Brien sat back in his chair and sighed.

"Okay, Mitch, we'll be checking around. You'd better get on home. You don't look too good, boy."

O'Brien smiled, and the boy glared back with an intense hatred that served only to further amuse the grinning sergeant. O'Brien followed him out front and watched until the door had closed quietly behind the limping figure.

"Keep your eye out for him, Kennedy. And if you see him near the drug store, chase him away. Old Man Sherman's been bitching like hell about the kids hanging around in front of his store. So if you see him, get him moving. And just chase him away, don't hit him."

"Okay, sarge."

"Go on, Kennedy, go back to your beat."

O'Brien closed his eyes and waited until the door slammed shut. He looked upward, and cursed the useless fan that twirled in vain above his head. He sat down at his desk, and went back to filling out reports.

The patrol car cruised slowly along the street. Kennedy crushed out a cigarette, and turned the corner. He was on Cross Street now, and there wasn't a single person in sight. It was lonely, but it sure made his job easy enough. He leaned back in the seat and rubbed the nape of his hairy neck. Suddenly he caught sight of a shadow darting out of a doorway. The rock smashed against the side window just as he slammed on the brake. He threw the door open and lunged out into the street. The figure was running along the sidewalk, away from him. He paused and fumbled with the holster lid, violently withdrawing his revolver before chasing after his attacker. A heavy, animal growl of anticipation crawled from his throat as he ran. The figure suddenly disappeared. Kennedy saw the alley looming ahead of him, and he swung his hulking frame around the alley corner. He never saw the rope that was stretched across his path; it yanked his legs out from under him, and sent him sprawling onto the damp concrete pavement. He tried to scramble to his feet, but he was knocked flat by a heavy weight which slammed into his back. He turned his head and saw the boot land on his outstretched arm. The same crushing weight fell on his other arm, and he saw the gun wrenched from his grasp. A hand locked itself in the long strands of his hair; it wrenched his head back, and sent it smashing forward into the concrete. Again and again, his head rose and fell, churning his face into a mass of broken bone and torn flesh. He tried to scream, but only a muffled sob escaped him. Through the ever-thickening haze, he felt his fingers being broken. He was pulled to his feet and thrown back against a wall. He saw the knee coming, but he was powerless to stop it. He managed a single, gurgling shriek before he sank unconscious to the blood-stained floor of the alley.

PORTRAIT

CHARLES DEAN

Clean sweeps of blown translucent cloud
So much light in so much dark
Grey stars under brown arcs of
Rapture covers for a snow
Short lovely pink-tinged white
Drops slowly to purple gateway
Past white and parted pillared arcs
Into deep impenetrable reddened depths.
Slide from the cavern and
Fasten to a white ebony length
Of tender valley running to a fall
Of white long beach below which
Oceans roll.

But life were full
Were I one grain of sand.

"HEARING FROST READ"

CHARLES DEAN

The sturdy oak on artificial hill
Can whisper songs his branches wrote in spring
And tell the saplings — upward-gazing, still —
Of what the shuttling winter's snows will bring.
He smiles and bends his trunk to shade their youth
From all the hackneyed hackings of the saw.
His roots, sunk deep into the rich red truth,
Feed them the sustenance of nature's law.

The saplings cannot feel his rugged strength
In limbs that dip with every drop of dew.
The road he chose is stretched out in its length —
The other's there, for they have choices too.
They spread their roots about with little sense —
They grow toward clouds, so there's no difference.

WERE IT SO

Bruce Stanford

The silent sentry of the day
His lofty lookout has forsook,
And pitchy blackness to waylay
Night's orbed maiden, fleet of foot,

Has to her bower mounted fast
To ply her ceaseless nighttime chore
Of guiding vessels through the blast
Of surging seas, whose mighty roar

Of rolling waves, both white and black,
Would quench the siren's luring song;
Of peeking from behind her back,
As she has peeked through ages gone,

At all the lovers as they sigh
While far beneath her heavenly den
They sit and gaze, eye fixed to eye,
And read the words from Cupid's pen.

Above her head, in number far
Exceeding all the warriors sent
By Helen to that world afar
Beyond the realms to mortals lent,

And sharing in her nighttime trade,
Extend the stars, a twinkling veil,
Dispersing to the earth's wide glade
A glowing light o'er hill and vale.

But as the mortals far beneath
These bodies of Dame Nature's store,
She too must now and then release
The tensions that pile at her door.

At times her face, with blinding rage,
Grows twisted, snarled and trembling,
As clouds of blackish hues upsurge
And mask the twinkling lights within.

Her throat may yield a hellish crash
Of rage surpassing Cyclop's scream
When from his eye the burning ash
Cast out his sight in a fiery stream.

Her breath blown hot upon the ground,
Full helpless as it lies beneath,
May leave behind a smold'ring mound
Of ashes amid human grief.

But just as soon her face grows calm,
She wipes away her anger's mist
And, reexposed, a soothing balm
The globes of night send to assist

Her in supplanting all the signs
Of her great wrath, now quite vanished.
It seems to me a pity finds
Itself expressed, and hatred banished,

After Nature's fits of fury.
To attone for malice rendered,
For all of the harsh injury,
A new freshness is engendered.

Were it so in mortal cases
Man would soon improve his state.
A bit of shame quite soon erases
The deep scars of rage and hate.

HEMLOCK WINE

Karen Tucker

To the flow of birth-bled trees coursing down
the cheeks of furrowed sky . . .
To the aching mist, pressed writhing upon the
fertile bosom of the ground . . .
To the lonesome call of a dying loon, caught
in the clinging swamps of fate . . .
To the agonized oedipus-marks left on the face
of a lover's moon . . .
To these I raise my elemental cup and drink
its hemlock taste,
These draughts of searing, god-banned love,—
my gushing eyes to waste.

Waldo or Going to the Dogs

by Paul E. Theroux

"Waldo, *is that you?*" The voice came from the kitchen.

"No, ma, it's just a plain old marmoset looking for a place to burrow," the boy said, flopping in the hollow of a sofa and just missing a protruding spring.

"What did you say, son?" the woman asked, appearing at the doorway to the kitchen. The woman looked at the boy, but only with her face and one of her eyes. The other eye — the left one — drifted off and focused lazily at a wax tulip that stuck sharply from a sepia photograph of a uniformed Civil War officer. Or it might have been the Boer War — the woman could never remember, since it was her cousin and not her father or brother.

"I said, yes, ma. It is me. And I'm looking for a place to burrow." He yawned.

"Did you see Grammy when you were out? You didn't see Grammy when you were out, did you? I was just wondering."

"You were just wondering what? If I saw Grammy?"

"Yes. You didn't, did you? See her?"

"No," said Waldo.

"I didn't think you would."

"Are you afraid she'll lose her way back?"

"She's in Oak Grove, son. Your Grammy's in Oak Grove. So why do you have to talk that way about someone who loves you?"

"Oh, this is the hunting season, isn't it?"

"Yes, it is, son."

"I wonder what Doctor Wasserman would say if I told him I had a grandmother that hunted dandelions in a cemetery all day," said Waldo. "He'd go nuts."

"What," said the woman.

"Think she'll bag any?" asked Waldo.

"Your Grammy's a pretty smart cookie for her age," the woman said knowingly. "Which is over seventy, I imagine. And she's still got a lot of . . . I-don't-know-what left in her."

"I don't know either," said Waldo.

"That Mr. Feeple passed away yesterday. The one that was clawed by the dog last year? We wrote you all about it. You know the Feeples. Near the kennel? Anyway, it was *cancer* this time. They said you couldn't look at him the last few weeks — eaten away and horrible, I imagine." She paused to wipe her hands on her apron, then continued, "I heard them going by on their way to Oak Grove, the Feeples. Cadillacs and everything. They had wreaths a mile a minute — never saw so many in my whole life. All sorts of designs, too, and colors. A regular *garden* they had in them cars, I'm telling you. They did it up in grand style." The woman mumbled, "grand style" several more times before the boy spoke.

"So they buried old Feeple at Oak Grove, eh?"

"You can't take it with you," the woman said quickly, without emphasis. She did not smile.

"No," said Waldo.

"Anyway, it must have let them all in. The dogs, you know. The dogs always chase those funeral things right through the front gate of Oak Grove. Grammy'll be mad as a hen."

"What do dogs have to do with Grammy digging dandelions every spring at Oak Grove?" Waldo asked, showing some interest.

"Well," the woman said, pursing her lips into a mocking smile, shaking her head from side to side, and closing one of her eyes, "I know I'd be *pretty careful* about eating dandelions that grew in a place where dogs were. Because dogs," she smiled, "just *might* have done you-know-what on them. I'm telling you I'd be mighty careful."

"So would I," said Waldo, trying to be unconvincing. "And I always have been."

"Your Grammy's careful where she picks her dandelions. And she's very *scientific* about it. I mean she makes a regular study of dandelion picking and digging. Always did, your Grammy."

"Yah, swell," said Waldo.

"But *dogs!* Why, my land, there must have been hundreds of them following that Feeple procession to Oak Grove. Poor old Grammy, she probably spent the whole day smelling dandelions and chasing dogs."

"She doesn't mind dogs. She raised one herself for forty years," said Waldo, just glancing up a moment.

"We always had a dog. We had a *feeling* for dogs — and for rats and mice, too. All kinds of animals just *flocked* to our house. But dogs. Dogs can smile at you." The woman smiled. "Or growl at you, or bark. I always said I'd rather have a person bark at me than a dog. Dogs means it so much more."

Waldo sighed. "She works like one," he said, "like a dog."

"Oh," the woman was now looking at two parts of the ceiling instead of two of the wall. "Oh, I imagine Grammy is just sitting there meditating on a grave or two. She's just as pleased as punch to be left alone in Oak Grove."

"She'll get her chance, by and by," said Waldo. "Unless the dogs get in again."

"She talks to them — the stones," said the woman. "She'd sit there *all day* if we let her. Did I tell you what she said when we asked her why she spent so much time in Oak Grove talking to those cement things?"

"No," Waldo said.

"You must have been away at the time."

"That," said Waldo, "I am sure of."

"She said, 'They don't talk back and that's what I like best of all.' Doesn't she have a lot of spunk for an old woman?"

"She sure does have a lot of spunk," said Waldo, moving slightly in the chair.

"They don't talk back and that's what I like best of all."

"When are we eating," asked Waldo.

"Did I tell you what she said to the mailman when he was late with her Social Security check?"

"Jesus," whispered Waldo, prayerfully.

"It was the *cutest* thing."

"Well, what did she say to the mailman! Or did she chin herself on the fence as he came up the walk to show how much spunk she had!"

"I do forget exactly *what* she said, but — you know — it was about that Polio Roosevelt and, I think, Alf Landon. Well, that mailman did not know whether he was *coming* or *going."*

"I believe you," said Waldo flipping the pages of a bulky magazine. "Why do we get these things with all the pictures and no words. I thought magazines were supposes to have words, or at least half words. There's *no words* in this thing — there's just pictures of football players and dishwashers and booze and it says here that 'sluggish kidneys cause back-ache.' No real words. Not one."

"Stop *complaining,* Waldo. That's all you've done since you came home. Complain about everything. I wouldn't mind, but you actually *look* for things to complain about."

"I don't have to look far," said Waldo. "I just have to look with both of my eyes."

"You never complained before you went away. I never remember you

complaining *once* — not once. About anything. You were the *best little boy.*"

"If I was anything, I was little."

"I always said, that Waldo's going to be a real gentleman when he grows up. Well, you're supposed to be grown up and what? Look at you. Especially since you came home. I thought they'd teach you something while you were away."

"Maybe they did," said Waldo.

"Well, I don't think they taught you anything but how to complain and how to be a wiseguy."

"They taught us how to brush our teeth. Up and down in the front; back and forth in the back, so's you can get the little food particles out of the holes."

"SEE! SEE! I told you! They *did* teach you how to insult your poor mother *loves* you. Waldo, I could kill you for talking to me like that."

"Stay loose," said Waldo.

"Someday you're gonna push me too far, Waldo, and I'll beat you to within an inch of your life! Do you hear me? I swear to God, Waldo, I'll kill you!" The woman sat down in a straight-backed chair, put her head in her hands and moaned. She hunched her shoulders jerkily — the way some people laugh. But tears were running between her fingers and plopping into her lap.

"Jeez, ma, take it easy," Waldo said. "I was just trying to explain about the toothbrushing lessons we got in Booneville . . ."

"Toothbrushing lessons, my eye! You're just mocking me, that's all. You're making fun of your poor old mother that loves you more than you can ever imagine. You hear me Waldo? I LOVE YOU MORE THAN YOU CAN EVER IMAGINE! I swear to God, I love you—everyone loves you. Grammy always says how nice you look, and is that the *thanks* we get for raising you to be strong and healthy with rosy cheeks. *Toothbrushing lessons!* I could *kill* you!"

"You can get cavities from the crap that sticks in your teeth—way the hell down where you don't usually brush. And you don't just brush the front either—you brush the whole . . ."

"STOP IT! Stop it, Waldo. I won't listen to another word."

"I'm just trying to tell you what you learn in Booneville and places like that."

"Don't tell *me* what they teach you in jail. I heard all about it from your uncle Walter and it was *no bed of roses!*"

"Walter was in the *pen*. That's different. Kids have schools until they get bigger—*then* if you foul up you're in the *pen*. . . . Which is *not* a school. It's a pen, that's all it is—you learn to live in a pen, when you're in a pen. And don't let anyone tell you different."

"Don't tell *me,* Waldo. You forget I'm your mother. The next thing you'll be saying is that they have bath lessons and eating lessons and god-knows-what-other kind of lessons."

"They call them *hygiene*. Hygiene lessons. They teach you to crap and chew and sweat and even where to wash yourself."

"Why . . . why that's a *lie*. That's what it is. A lie. A lie. You're trying to get my goat. I won't listen to another word."

"And when they get through with those they think of more lessons that they never teach you any place except Booneville. See ma, no one tells you this stuff until you foul up. Then, when you get fouled up, they give you the whole damn story. Only it's the hard way to learn how to crap and wash because you have to be arrested first—for something completely different from crapping wrong, although it's the same in a way, I guess. I don't know."

"Stop *lying* to me, Waldo. I hate liars, you know how much I hate liars."

"I'm not lying, ma. You can ask any . . ."

"Filthy lies. Don't deny they're filthy lies and stop ripping up the couch with your fingernails. Haven't I got enough to do around here without you making more work for me? Haven't I, Waldo?"

"I don't know, yeah, I guess." Waldo smirked, then the smirk dissolved and his face pinched itself into a tragic mask. "I'm sorry—really sorry—I was rubbing the couch. I should have known that rots the material. So I'll stop right now. I'm awfully sorry I ever touched the thing." Waldo started to shout and orate with gestures. "NO KIDDING, MOTHER, I AM TRULY SORRY FOR EVER SITTING IN THIS CHAIR. I SHOULD SIT ON DIRT. ON BLACK WET STICKY PILES OF SMELLY DIRT!" Then, he hissed, "That's where I belong. You belong on a throne because you're nice. Really, mother, that's where you belong—on a throne. I'm a creep, a lizard, and a ferret."

"You're lying and mocking again. I can tell." Waldo's mother turned away.

"I *love* you, mother dear."

"I don't believe you."

Waldo gnarled his fingers and twisted his face and hopped and clattered over to his mother's back. Through his lips, battered into wide bands

from somewhere within his face, he slavered, measuring his words carefully, "I-hate-your-guts."

Waldo's mother leaped in the air and faced Waldo, bent and stooping like a gargoyle, "SEE! You *do* hate me, Waldo! I knew it would come out! I could *kill you*. Don't give me the chance or I will kill you!"

"Now, no-one's going to kill anyone around here," the voice rasped through the screen door, "although someone should get a damn good hiding."

An old woman came through the door and slammed it shut so hard that a wad of cotton flew out of a rusted hole and settled on the porch. The woman was carrying a paper bag—overstuffed—in one clenched fist and a long knife upraised in the other fist which dropped clods of dirt onto the linoleum. She stood hawklike a moment, her claws full. Then she wheeled and squawked at Waldo's whimpering mother. Waldo's mother was still recovering from the frenzy which had congealed and been deposited into a ball of Kleenex clutched tightly in her hand. "Let's just be reasonable," the woman said, her feet planted firmly on the linoleum, "so's we can at least carry out our threats instead of letting them hang in the air. And for godsakes, don't get all riled up over *that* mound." She jerked the knifeblade in the direction of Waldo, flinging a cube of dirt into his abdomen.

"Who are you calling a mound?" Waldo asked, looking at the beak for the first time as he seated himself.

"I'm calling *you* a mound, and get off your butt when there's a lady present. Didn't they teach you that along with the toothbrushing lessons?"

"You've been *listening,* mother," the younger woman said.

"You're damn right I've been listening," the hawk said. "I've been out on those steps for ten minutes. I came in to throw up."

"Mother, Waldo can *hear* you!"

"Well, I had to listen to him. I'm sick. Leave me alone. I should have stayed in Oak Grove—it was quiet once Feeple and his noisy bunch took off."

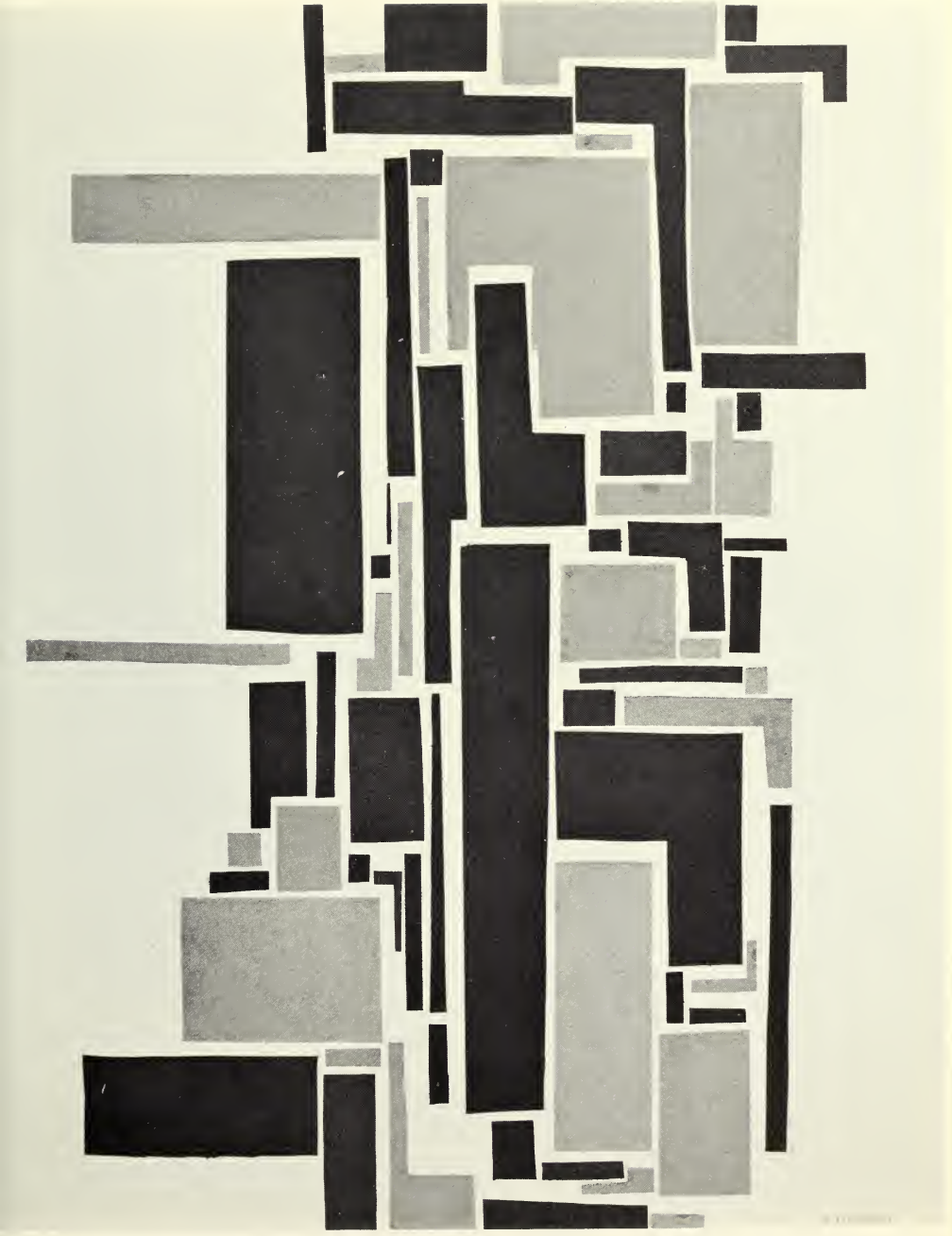
"How'd the hunting go?" asked Waldo.

"Yes, mother, how *did* the dandelion hunting go? Did you get an awful lot of them?"

"Emma, will you stop talking to me like that! You're *my* daughter, remember? You don't have to use that baby talk until I start using it. Which will be never I hope."

"Dogs?" asked Waldo.

(*cont. on page 41*)



Design

1962, Mary Desmond

Intaglio "Untitled" *June 1962*, Paul J. Serra

"Cobblestones At Night" *Photo by* Don Crasco

Three Dimensional Design Problems

Photography by Stan Patz

Three Dimensional Design Problems

Photography by Stan Patz

Head Study — Solarized STAN PATZ

Engraving — Seated Figure

June 1962, Wm. E. Shumway

Intaglio City Bridge *1962.* Carolyn E. Heitin

"Not many," said Grammy, "Harold Feeple brought some with him. You know, they were chasing his casket. I never liked the guy anyway. And I like him even less now."

"No one'll miss Harold Feeple," said the younger woman.

"EMMA! Don't say that! There'll be a lot of people that'll miss Harold. Like the guys he used to drink with. Like . . . like *maybe his family*. His family might miss him, don't you think so, Emma? I said, don't you think . . ."

"I heard what you said. You also said you didn't like him."

"Doesn't mean a thing. You can hate a person and still miss him. In fact, if he goes off and dies on you it's worse. And if he lets a million dogs in with his casket to pee on the dandelions, then I'd say he's really put one over on you. Wouldn't you say so, Waldo?"

"I suppose if you're the type of person that eats dandelions, then probably *anything* is possible."

"You'd better wise-up, Waldo. Dandelions kept me afloat during the depression. I owe a lot to dandelions. And you owe a lot to me." Grammy narrowed her eyes into slits, then said without moving her mouth, "and don't you ever forget it."

"You're tired, Grammy. You're just *tired,* that's all. Why don't you . . ."

"Tired. Why it's restful sitting there with those stones. I can hardly wait to be put there under six feet of nice quiet dirt. And when I do, Emma—when I do finally get shovelled into that hole—*you're going to miss me.* And so are you, Waldo. We'd better get that straight right now so's there's no misunderstanding each other."

"Of course. Why, we'll miss you to *death,* Grammy. You've been so *nice* to us . . ."

"I *bore* you and six others like you!" The woman thundered like an insulated oracle.

"We don't mind," said the woman called Emma.

"Well, for your information, I *did* mind quite a bit at the time. You're making me sorry I bothered. Except that it wasn't my choice. Or I guess maybe it could've been, but it seemed different then . . . things *were* positively different in those days."

"I don't see why they were so different."

"You don't see much, anyway," said Waldo.

". . . everybody says times change," the younger woman was speaking rapidly, barely pausing for breath. "Well, I don't think they change at all. I really don't see how they change at all. Sure, things get bad

sometimes, but they don't change. They *do* get worse. I'd *swear* to that."

"All right!" shouted Waldo. "Suppose the world turned into a meatball. Would you notice that difference." He rose from the sofa.

"That's enough of that, Waldo," said Grammy. "You're getting a little too flip for your own good. *I* think *I* should know if things change, shouldn't I?"

"Sure, Grammy," said Waldo. "You should know . . . you seen it. But tell *her.*"

"I don't think I should tell anyone that doesn't want to listen. That doesn't have the common decency to realize that old ladies are right sometimes."

"I'm not old," said Waldo, "but I think I can tell when something's fouled up. I should know about those things, at least. And that's most of it."

"So I pick dandelions and make apple pies with chicken fat—that's habit. But it's also a duty. And anyone that doesn't have the good sense . . ."

". . . or the good eyesight," interrupted Waldo.

". . . to see what this house is turning into . . ."

"We forgive you," said Waldo's mother, staring at the tulip and trembling slightly.

"I don't care about being FORGIVEN! I don't want to be *forgotten!* Don't you understand that, Emma? Do you see what I'm getting at?"

"Be the same as the Feeples if you ask me," said Waldo.

"By that you mean?" The old woman turned slowly, tottering, and glared at Waldo.

"I don't know."

"You know or you wouldn't have said it!" Grammy said, becoming hoarse.

"Please, children," said Waldo's mother. "It's terribly hot and you're both tired. I understand how the heat can get you down."

"IT'S NOT THE HEAT!" said Grammy and Waldo in unison.

"Well, I wish I knew what *I* could do," said Waldo's mother.

"You could do nothing—that would be better than fouling any of us up any more . . ."

"You'd think *you* were the only foul ball," squawked Grammy.

Waldo's mother's face remained expressionless and tilted to the left as she walked slowly over to Waldo and put her face four inches from his. Then, she spoke in a sing-song, "when are you going to fix the faucet, Waldo? One month ago you said you would fix the faucet and you have

not made one attempt to fix it. Not for a whole month. I am not talking about the faucet dripping as much as I am talking about you, Waldo. I don't see how you intend to make anything of yourself . . . I mean, anything at all . . ."

"Emmahhhh," sang Grammy, "what do you ever expect to get accomplished by crooning to him like that. For Godsakes . . ."

"Please, mother, don't use that language in front of Waldo. I wish you wouldn't use that type language in front of the boy."

"THWIFTY!" The voice came from the floor in a delicate blast. "THWIFTY!"

The woman called Emma jerked her head toward the floor. Grammy turned her eyes slowly upon a blonde head. Waldo glanced at syrup, lemon-colored, running down a fat hand and off an equally pudgy elbow.

"Another one," said Waldo.

"Thwifty Thullivan ith on telivithon. Turn it on pleath." The mouth was half-filled with lemon popsicle. The face glistened with the saccharine juices. The front of the jersey stuck out and displayed a protruding navel on a melon of a stomach.

"Don't you feed him?" said Grammy. "Does he have to go around eating and dripping that slop. My God."

"I *try,*" said Waldo's mother. "Why, you can ask Edwin if I don't try . . ."

"I don't have to ask Edwin anything. I can *see* how this house is turning into . . . a . . . a . . . great big . . ."

"Meatball," said Waldo.

"Meatballs are edible," said Grammy. "But I cannot stomach this house."

"Thith houth," began the voice from the floor. "This houth . . ."

"Emma," said Grammy, "does that boy have to talk like that? It grates on my aged nerve-endings."

"Nerve-endingth!"

"My God," said Grammy in bald despair.

"I try," said Waldo's mother.

"Everybody tries," said Waldo.

"Not you," said Grammy. "Or you either, Emma."

"You're always picking at us, Grammy."

"It's picking ON us, not picking AT us," sighed Waldo.

"My God," said Grammy, "I'm getting out of here."

"I'm coming with you," said Waldo. "I've got to go someplace."

"Not you," said Grammy. "I want to die alone and cold. I hate clutter.

I'd like to think I could be alone then at least."

Waldo's mother tensed. Both her arms crooked in the air and twitched over the heads of Waldo and Grammy. "GO!" She shrieked. "Both of you can go to . . . to . . ."

"SAY IT EMMA I DARE YOU!" shouted Grammy.

". . . Blazes." The arms drooped.

"I won't need these," said Grammy, pitching the dandelions into a wastebasket across the room.

"For Godsakes," said Waldo.

"I'm going off to die," said Grammy. "This is a madhouse."

"They call 'em *looney bins* and funny farms," said Waldo. "This is one or the other."

"POT," said the voice from the floor.

"Go upstairs," said Waldo.

"I want thumone to help me. Thumone alwayth helpth me."

"My God," said Grammy.

Waldo's mother tensed again. This time like an Aztec dancer. Feet apart. She began waving her arms once again in short galvanic contractions and screamed breathlessly, "You think you're the only ones that are persecuted! You think Edwin and I have it easy. Well," she paused, "you're wrong!" She looked a bit hysterically at Grammy, then at Waldo, and even looked at the figure on the floor before she said, "I don't have it easy at all! I'm going all the time!"

"I'm going now," Grammy exhaled painfully as she placed her cutlass on the coffee table.

"Nobody has it easy," said Waldo. "But some people do have it harder than others."

"What do *you* know about having it *hard,"* asked Grammy.

"I know plenty. I can *see,* you know. That helps."

Waldo's mother began nodding furiously, nuttily. "I *know,* I *know.* That's meant as a wisecrack to me. I'm not stupid . . . or as stupid as you think I am."

"No one accused you of being *stupid,* exactly," said Grammy, tiredly, "but I've done my bit. I am leaving now . . . maybe for good. I hope the house corrodes. I hope I die. I hope the dogs leave the cemetery. I am positively *living on hope."* Grammy shuffled out of the living room, slamming the screen door. She limped down the long, cracked walk, one shoulder higher than the other.

Waldo's mother continued, ". . . so this is a looney bin, is it? Well, you live here and so does she." Waldo's mother jerked her thumb toward the screen door. "So what does that make you? I'm not the only nut

around here, I know that much; I *know* I *couldn't* be the only nut around here. Or this whole place wouldn't be a looney bin. There has to be someone else."

"It's not me," said Waldo.

"Then, it's her," said Waldo's mother, just raising her thumb this time, as if the thumb had now become Grammy.

"Okay, maybe it is," said Waldo to the thumb, "as long as it ain't me."

"Well, I think it *is* you, Waldo. Anyone can *see* how you've changed."

Waldo mumbled a reply.

"You hear me, Waldo? Why aren't you looking at me? I swear I am learning to hate this house." She paused. "And I am learning to hate you, Waldo. Talk about dogs in cemeteries! Why, this whole place is going to the dogs! Waldo . . . look me in the eye and I will tell you you've been an awful disappointment to me and to Grammy and especially to your father."

"I've already explained the whole thing to him. I think I've made myself clear to him . . . or maybe I haven't made myself clear to him. But it doesn't matter, anyway."

"Look at me when you speak to me," said Waldo's mother.

"I'm looking," said Waldo.

"You're *not* looking!"

"I'm looking as much as I ever wanted to look," said Waldo.

"LOOK ME IN THE EYE!" screamed Waldo's mother.

Waldo went over to the knife on the coffee table. He picked it up and walked to a window box which was resting on the sill and on several thicknesses of newspapers. Then, he cut the stalks of four rubber plants and lopped five geraniums and left them hanging from the sides of their pots, as if they were nauseated. Waldo then kicked over the wastebasket with the dandelions in it, spilling everything onto the linoleum. Walking past his mother he said, almost in a whisper, *"your eye"* and continued into the kitchen, slamming the door behind him. When he reached the kitchen he flicked on the garbage disposal and tried to force the knife into it.

In the living room, Waldo's mother took the little boy by the arm and directed him upstairs. Then, she stood quiet a moment surveying the room. She kicked, but failed to overturn, a chair at the right of the coffee table. She broke a fingernail on one of the draperies when it refused to be pulled from its rod.

As Waldo entered the living room again he saw his mother bent over the right-hand side of the window box pushing the stems of the cut geraniums back into the dirt.

LANDSCAPE

Patrick J. McGreal

The leafless branches, stark naked in the wind,
The yellowed-brown earth of an open field,
The line of pine trees blocking the view
To the misty blue, smooth, rolling hills beyond,
The white sky with smears of light blue imbued
Softly and gently blending into horizon's line.
What's beyond that line and beyond and beyond?
More trees, open fields, rolling hills?
I wish; I could — that far and more,
I wish — I could.

CHAMBERMAID AT THE DOOR

Douglas Flaherty

My body craves to take a form invisible.
To sleep in a woman's womb
and tickle her into creativity,
To soar to heavenly heights and
taste of the cosmic genes,
To rub my form against the world and
sense the teledendrons
queeze with love,
To sink to the lowest depths
and tread God's print upon the
ageless sand.
Past-ageless, Present-ageless, Future-ageless:
The invisible
shall race time
round the corners
of the globe
and back again.

My body craves to take a form invisible.
To replace the aged lover
at his game,
To roam amid a crowd and cheek an old worn face
or smell the new brewed elixir of birth,
where fresh blows the night and a whisper
of desire upon the wind,
beckoning us to partake in the miracle of life:
Come all bodies
melt into one,
and dine with Eros,
while the invisible
stands chambermaid at the door.

GANNET

Karen Tucker

Over the dunes of inter-coast that echo
In time-arrested cadences the phrases of the sea —

Over the glazed sun surface of surf-kneeded
Sand, where landmarks are pebbles and gutted shells —

Over the fullness of a round-bellied coast,
Out to the breasting curve of the high-swept sea, —
There — under the sea wind — soaring.

PREPARATION OF HERRING GULL STUDY SKIN

Karen Tucker

Where death in nature dessicates with corporal grandeur;
Man, strong-fingered one, preserves from mundane
Rot the pliant outer shell of feathered cloakment;
Holds, in grotesque purity the hollow skin and
Feather-shafted complex that was once a sea-swept gull.

The pinion tips lie sharp, unpreened, where quills
And barbs bank stiffly to the stroking hand,
And fall as near to order as their greyness might;
And deep, as on the breast and back, white
Contour-feathers curl; a rippling waxy texture
Overlays the fingers to the second joint, and
Fills the hand with a peculiar warmth, almost
As if the shadowed vestiges of flight remained.

TO ERR . . .

by Lester Neale

Henry Potter, dressed in white shirt and pants, stood patiently in the doorway of the supervisor's office. He was waiting for the man at the desk to assign him a ward for the night. Sunday night, he reminded himself. It's a good thing it's Sunday night. Sunday is the last day of the work-week and you're glad of it. Now you won't have to work in this crumby state hospital again until this coming Wednesday night. And Wednesday night you'll get your check for forty-eight dollars and eighty-eight cents. What a lucky guy! He smiled inwardly. The more he thought about his check, the more he wanted to burst out laughing. A check was just a piece of paper with your name on it. He had a crazy notion to tell the supervisor about it. Maybe he would get the point and laugh along with him. Henry jingled the set of keys in his pocket, adopted his favorite grin, and prepared to ask him about it.

Before he could formulate a good way to introduce the subject of checks, however, the night supervisor looked up blankly at him. "Ni3, Potter," he said curtly. Henry nodded his head and smiled his acknowledgement. The man at the desk looked up at him again as if to say, "Well, what are you waiting for, hell to freeze over? Go on, get up to the ward." Henry felt his face redden in embarrassment and he decided against mentioning his notion about checks. He mumbled a feeeble "Yes, sir," and walked away from the office, directing his steps towards the heavy oak

door that opened onto the lower halls of the men's wards. Swinging the door shut in back of him and locking it, he continued on, following the familiar route that led to the elevator.

It was hot and stuffy in the corridors tonight. Henry could hear the steam hissing and popping in the outdated radiators. He found it difficult to walk with much speed or surety in the semi-darkness of the halls. Two sputtering neon lights in the ceiling of each corridor supplied it with little or no illumination. What feeble light there was in the slumbering halls tonight came principally from the sinister moon, which glowed eerily through the opaque, grime-caked windows. A few of the old men were still up walking around in the shadows. They had great difficulty in getting around; moving slowly and painfully up and down the hall, with no particular destination, except perhaps the bathroom. Henry interrupted his walk, momentarily, to slip two of his own cigarettes into the withered hand of old Antonio. He heard a faintly whispered "Thank you" as he walked through the last door, at the end of the hall and locked it in back of him.

Walking on, towards the elevator, he felt overwhelmed by a sense of pity for the sick old men, like Antonio, who shuffled aimlessly, back and forth, through the corridors of the hospital. "There are things in this world worse than death, son," his mother had told him years back. Her words ran through his mind fleetingly and he tried to fight down the depression and sadness they always provoked in him. Try as he would, however, he could not help imagining that the forgotten old men around him were actually whispering, "Stay, Lad, the true meaning and reality of life for which you search lies here, in the lonely silence of these halls, between the faded yellow walls on both sides of you. Don't hurry; stay here with us and wait for death." Henry shivered involuntarily and forced the disturbing thoughts from his mind. As he got on the elevator, the face of his old girl appeared dimly in his mind's eye. Why was this gloomy, dungeon-like place always reminding him of his unsuccessful love affair with her? Of course he never received any answers to his question from the cold, dull gray walls of the elevator. They seemed to have problems of their own.

Henry stepped onto the elevator and pushed the black button that closed the doors. The elevator rose tiredly and stopped rather abruptly at Ni3, as though it had just caught itself in time. The old battered doors slid open and he stepped out. The doors banged shut in back of him, and he pushed the sadness a little further back in his mind. He walked solemnly into the brightly lit office.

The report book on the desk was open to a clean page. Several unwashed urine bottles lined the window-sill in back of the desk, and the key to the medicine cabinet was still in the lock. Someone had forgotten to take it out and put it back in the desk, where it belonged. Henry stepped forward and locked the door of the cabinet, throwing the key disgustedly into the top drawer of the desk. It occurred to him that perhaps he was the only attendant covering the ward. It was eleven-fifteen already and no one else had showed up. No, he told himself confidently; Simpson was probably down on the other end sacking out. Everyone knew about Ni3; the night attendants there had been sleeping on the job for the past twenty years or so. No one ever said anything to them, though, except when they forgot to sign the report book or pass the night medications. And Simpson . . . well Simpson slept every night, no matter what ward he was on. No one ever called him down for it either. Help was hard to get at a state hospital, good help, they said. Besides, Simpson was a ten-year man with relatives in the state house, or something like that. "What a grubby, little weasel," muttered Henry softly. He disliked the short, dark-skinned man thoroughly, never passing up the chance to curse him under his breath. In his estimation, Simpson was a foul-mouthed, two-faced stool pigeon, capable of saying or doing anything that would save his own skin. He seldom washed, shaved, or changed his clothes; and he was always telling dirty jokes or defiling women. "Damn his rotten soul," muttered Henry, as though he expected some invisible person in the office to endorse his curse. He slammed the door shut on his way out of the office, locked it, and yawned sleepily. The dirty-faced clock on the wall opposite him said eleven twenty-five.

To his right, at the far end of the hall, a heavy iron door with yellow paint-peelings and countless scratches, yawned back at him. The door was generally left open at night so that the patients could get to the toilet. Henry walked steadily down the corridor in the semi-darkness, listening to the sound of his footsteps echoing in back of him. He entered the big, musty-smelling room and stood quietly in front of a long row of beds that ran along the back wall. Under the big windows with their torn screens, there were a number of chairs arranged every which-way, and a modern card table with a coffee stain on its otherwise shiny top had been placed among some of the battered chairs. He noticed that three or four of these straight-backed chairs had been placed in a row, next to the radiator. Someone was stretched full-length across the seats, with a faded blue bedspread pulled up over himself to keep him warm. Henry bit his bottom lip nervously and walked over to the snoring man on the chairs. He cursed

silently when he recognized the face: it was Simpson's.

Henry nudged the little rat-faced man and roused him from his slumber. "Hello, Simp," he offered resignedly. "I'm working up here tonight." The older man opened his eyes and looked up dispassionately at him. Then he growled low in his throat, like someone with the death rattle. "What do yuh want me ta do about it, you freakin nut?," he began. A long stream of foul, abusive profanities spilled out of his mouth at the young attendant. He obviously did not care to be awakened in the middle of the night. When he had exhausted his vocabulary of cuss-words, he rolled over angrily on his side, turning his back. Then, as if he had almost forgotten it, he called Henry's attention to the night medications. "Don't forget now, Potter," he grunted, "Robinson gets two pills at two o'clock." He snarled another obscenity as an afterthought. "How do I know which ones to give him?" demanded Henry, now settled comfortably in an easy-chair across from Simpson. He lit a cigarette in the dark, letting the match burn almost down to his fingers before blowing it ont. From out of the almost suffocating darkness, opposite him, came Simpson's instructions, faintly, just before he dropped back to sleep. "Robinson ain't got no card; the medicine's down in the office . . . two pills . . . on top of the desk."

Henry finished his cigarette and dropped off to sleep. When the supervisor from NiI, (a veteran of the Korean war and a college senior), poked him in the ribs at one o'clock, he only half woke up. He vaguely heard a voice telling him something . . . something about medicine on top of the desk . . . in the office . . . would he be sure to give it at the right time? He answered groggily, "Oh sure, I won't forget." Then he had gone back to sleep, the voice fading away into the dark.

Around three o'clock he awoke with a start and jumped up from his chair. He hurried out of the room towards the office, stumbling through the darkness like a zombie. He tried with no success to shake the fog out of his head. Everything was a blur in front of him. When he finally managed to locate the office door and unlock it, he was practically sleeping on his feet. His eyes were wide open but his mind was sealed tight. Pills: he remembered what Simpson had said. He recalled the second voice that had spoken to him, telling him not to forget the pills. The clock in the office read five minutes of three. The pills were supposed to have been given at two. Oh well, one hour either way wouldn't make that much difference, he thought to himself. He squinted in the bright light of the office and scanned the top of the desk, his eyes falling on two coated capsules. The presence of a physician's order card along with them did not strike him as peculiar. Had he been wider awake, he might have remembered

what Simpson had said about Robinson's not having a card. Henry's thoughts were fuzzy and jumbled however, and he forgot. He stumbled back to the ward like a yawning drunkard, a cup of water in one hand, the two pills in the other. When he came to Robinson's bed, he poked the corpulent epileptic in his soft, flashy belly. Robinson struggled slowly to a sitting position and rubbed his eyes. Henry set the cup of water down on the card table in back of him and forced the two pills between the epileptic's stubborn, cracked lips. When they were safely lodged in the patient's mouth, the young attendant turned around and picked up the cup of water, spilling some of it on the yellow top of the card table. He paused to wipe up some of the water with his shirtsleeve and spread the rest of it around with his free hand. When he turned around, he noticed a peculiar look of anger and hostile resistance in Robinson's face. He poured the water into the patient's mouth and yawned deeply again. "They're for your own good, Robinson," he said. "You won't have so many seizures now." Henry returned to the office, signed the medication book hastily, locked the door in back of him and meandered back up the hall with his eyes closed, feeling his way along the wall in the dark. The clock in the office had said three-forty-five, he reminded himself; he had three good hours left to sleep until the day shift came on. Henry found his chair again and soon fell sound asleep.

Someone was shaking him gently. He opened his eyes, blinked, and looked into the anxious, questioning face of Grennon, the attendant from NiI. Something was wrong. The big man started to speak tensely to the young attendant, as though there were a rattlesnake under Henry's chair "I came up to look for some urine bottles, kid, and I noticed something strange. The two pills on the desk are gone. What happened to them?," he whispered fearfully. Henry, who had been disturbed at first by the attendant's words, relaxed in his chair and smiled reassuringly. "It's all right Dave," he said calmly. I gave them to Robinson at two o"clock. I didn't forget." The big attendant's face turned pale. His eyes blazed red and he gasped. "You what?", he shouted hoarsely, clutching Henry by the front of his shirt and pulling him bodily up out of the chair. "They were for Skinner," he screamed, shaking his captive roughly, "I came up at one and told you about them . . ." Henry's voice cut in, broken and unsteady. "I gave them to Robinson," he blurted, "just like Simpson told me too." His voice faltered again and he could hear his heart pounding wildly, like a savage's drum. "Simpson," said Henry, looking wildly around the now-illuminated room for the little man. "Simpson told me to." Across the room Simpson was still sleeping soundly, his slack mouth emitting volleys

of loud indifferent snores. "Simpson!," roared Henry at the top of his lungs. He wanted to wake the sleeping attendant and get him to verify his story. Simpson rolled over on his back and stretched, pulling the bedspread off him and throwing it onto the floor.

Before Henry could say anything more to Simpson, however, Grennon released him and started running towards the office, motioning over his shoulder for Henry to follow him. "Never mind about him!," he shouted. "Open up a can of sweetened pineapple juice and bring it into the office! For Chrissakes, hurry it up! We may be too late already!" Henry fumbled nervously with his keys at the kitchen door, drying to find the one that fitted the lock. Impatient though he was, he was too frightened to swear at the stubborn door, as he had before in less crucial situations. Instead, he hurried as fast as his shaking hands would let him. The words "too late" kept pounding in his head. When he finally found the right key, he pushed the door open and ran towards the refrigerator. He knew Grennon was waiting for him anxiously in the office; he could hear him shouting hysterically. The can of juice shook convulsively in Henry's trembling hands as he ran out of the kitchen and into the office. Grennon produced a can opener, which he applied savagely to the can, bellowing to Henry in a horror stricken voice: "Good God! Do you realize what you've done? Those goddam pills were orinase. A little bit wouldn't hurt anybody. But there were 50,000 units on the desk . . .! You know what that stuff does? It takes the sugar out of the bloodstream!" The big attendant's words ran closely together. "Skinner is a diabetic . . . he gets orinase to keep down the sugar in his system. He was supposed to get twice his regular dosage this morning because yesterday he got into Paquettes candy bars." Grennon hurriedly filled a tall glass with the pineapple juice, poured a full cup of sugar in after it, and stirred the two together. The terrified look was still on his face. "Robinson's not a diabetic," he whispered hoarsely. "Those pills could kill him unless we work fast." He dashed past Henry and raced up the hall to the big room. Henry, seized by a paroxysm of terror, chased after him. He helped Grennon to pull Robinson to a sitting position, and together they managed to get all the juice down him. Simpson stood by, at the foot of the bed, watching them curiously. Grennon looked at Henry solemnly and shook his head. "If you haven't ever prayed before, kid, you'd better start now. If this stuff doesn't work, Robinson could be dead at six o'clock. We won't know until then. For your sake Potter . . . I hope he makes it. I'm not breathing a word of this to anybody until six o'clock comes and goes. And you keep your mouth shut, too, Simpson, yuh hear?" Simpson looked up absent-mindedly and innocently whined,

"Don't look at me! I don't know what this is all about. I didn't give Robinson no pills . . . I was asleep!" Grennon seemed about to say something to the little rat-faced attendant, but he turned to Henry instead. "Six o'clock," he said, "I'll be up then. You better start prayin'."

Grennon turned out the lights and walked quickly out of the room. Henry heard the elevator doors open and close down the hall, then complete silence fell over the ward.

Simpson yawned sleepily in the darkness. "It's 4:15," he said levelly. Henry sat in a chair next to Robinson's bed, listening to the epileptic's heavy breathing. He didn't answer. In a few minutes, Simpson spoke up again: "That freakin stuff you gave him will probably kill him," he said quietly, almost hopefully, waiting for a response. Henry wanted to jump up and scream at the man, but he remained glued in his chair, staring blankly into the darkness. His mind raced out of control, from one thought to another. He could hear his mother's voice, as though she was right there in the room. "Son", she was saying, "there are things in this world far worse than death. Don't you ever forget that." Henry's forehead was dripping wet and the palms of his hands were covered with cold sweat. "Thank you," croaked the tired voice of old Antonio. Henry imagined he could hear the sound of feet shuffling back and forth in the hall two floors below him. His own words started to come back to him. First, "they're waiting to die"; then, "damn his rotten soul"; followed by, "Oh no, I won't forget"; and finally, "they're for your own good Robinson, you won't have so many seizures now." His heart pounded in his ears and his whole body was numb with fear. "Quarter of five," said Simpson, consulting his watch. A match flared in the darkness as he lit a cigarette.

Outside, morning was approaching fast. The coal blackness of the night was slowly giving way to the gray of morning. A few of the patients were already stirring in their beds. "How do you feel, Robinson," asked Henry, his voice shaking with fear. He squeezed his hands together and waited tensely for a reply. He could still hear the epileptic breathing evenly next to him. "I feel fine" mumbled Robinson sleepily, rolling onto his side in the bed. Simpson came over to the side of the bed and said flatly, "Five-thirty, I'm going down for a coffee." He cast a long look at Robinson, then left the room. Staring dumbly after the departing attendant, Henry repeated the word five-thirty over and over in his mind. He bent his head down to his knees and closed his eyes. It was difficult at first, but he eventually managed to find the words: "Our Father, who art in Heaven, hallowed . . ." He prayed on silently. Would God please let Robinson live? He, Henry Potter, was asking God for this one favor. He was sorry

for having missed church so many Sundays. He would go this Sunday; he promised, and every Sunday for the rest of his life, if God would only let Robinson live. Henry confessed and repented all the sins that he could remember committing in his life. And finally, when his prayer was finished, he cried, softly, letting his tears run down his cheeks and drip down onto the front of his white shirt. He was still crying when Grennon's hand touched his shoulder. "He made it," said the big attendant peremptorily, managing a smile. "I guess the juice and sugar's what did it. As far as I'm concerned, this never happened. I'll destroy the medicine-slip down in the office and write out a new one. And you; well you forget about it too. Don't ever tell a soul about it. Just make believe it was all a horrible nightmare." He turned to leave, then added: "you're a pretty lucky fella, Henry, I hope you know that." Henry nodded his head in agreement and whispered feebly, "Thanks, thanks for everything." He wanted to say more but the big man cut him off. "Forget it kid." Then he grinned. "Why don't you get these lazy bones out of bed and strip off all the sheets, all right?" He ruffled Henry's hair playfully with his hand, then left the room, whistling.

Henry rose from his chair, stiffly, and went around to each bed, rousing its occupant, and pulling off the soiled sheets. When he came to Robinson's bed, he nudged him in the soft flesh of his side, and tickled him. The epileptic rolled over and stared up at him sluggishly. Henry tickled him again, but the fat man refused to budge; he glared at his heckler obstinately. "C'mon you lazy oaf," said Henry teasingly, "you can sleep all you want tonight." He playfully pulled the pillow away from him and threw it on an empty bed nearby. Henry bent over to tickle the patient again, and, suddenly, his heart stopped beating. There, next to Robinson's head on the sheet were two, tiny white capsules. Henry stared at them in dumb amazement. When he had sufficiently recovered himself enough to move, he wheeled around and raced down the corridor towards the office. He was half way down the hall when he stopped, suddenly. The day shift was in the office now; he couldn't tell them about his mistake. Destroy the evidence, he thought quickly. He thrust his hands into his pockets and searched frantically for the pills. Somewhere in his brain an alarm went off. The pills . . . he had left them up on the bed . . . with Robinson! He dashed back up the hall and entered the big room just as the fat epileptic was getting up. Henry made a desperate search of the bed for the innocent-looking capsules; but they were gone. His eyes widened with horror and he turned his petrified face towards the epileptic. Robinson smiled a sheepish grin at him and began dressing . . .

DIE WITH YOUR PANTS ON
by Sam Gorvine

"Jack won't be back till after one," Aunt Lillian says, handing me my father's suit with a plastic cover over it. Jack is Dad's brother, and the oldest of my six uncles.

"Maybe you could drop by later tonight if there was something special."

"No thanks. I just asked because I never see either of you except here together."

"I know, I know," she laughs. "Listen, the family's been kidding us for twenty years. 'Retire,' they say, 'You're rich enough already!' Well, I tell you, a dry cleaning and tailor shop may not seem like much, or so important that it's got to stay open late like a barroom or something, but our customers aren't the usual kind. See there, across the street?" She points to fourteen stories of grey brick. "That's Beth Israel Hospital; around the corner on Longwood Ave. is the Boston Children's and Harvard Medical and Dental; those modern buildings behind the shop are the New England Deaconess; and farther up a few blocks on Huntington, is the Peter Bent Brigham. The people around here don't keep hours like other folks, especially nurses and interns. So we stay open late and keep our prices down. It's paid off, let me tell you! They all come here now."

She stops to take the yellow slip of paper from my father's suit, putting the pin through the loose-fitting sleeve of her old baggy dress.

"Thirty years we been here, thirty years. When the going got rough those first few months, Jack was ready to give up a dozen times, but I

got behind him and pushed till we made it. Don't tell me all the extra hours and all the pushing wasn't worth it." She smiles and leans across the counter on her elbows. "If you knew what we got planned when we retire . . ." She winks mischieviously at me. She has these weird wire-rimmed bifocals on only they're not really bifocals because she's taken out the top part of the lenses. I hear they were her mothers, but I guess she doesn't need the top parts. "I remember . ." she goes on, stopping to blow her long, pointy nose . . . I remember almost forty years ago when me and Jack came over from the old country. We were just married, twenty, and green as dollar bills, but we weren't gonna be poor here, too. We saved what we made till we got this place and we've kept to ourselves and worked hard since. "She smoothes the grey jungle of her hair with a calloused hand and leans over the counter again.

"Can you keep a secret?" she whispers, looking around almost furtively.

"Of course. What is it?" I just love secrets.

She puts a hand over her mouth and giggles like a schoolgirl.

"We're going to Europe!" she says, her eyes shining.

"Sometimes at night me and Jack just lie there and talk about what we're going to do and after he goes to sleep I stay awake and think how wonderful it's gonna be." She giggles again. "I'm too old for all the romantic stuff everyone talks about happening on trips, but, oh my . . . all those places! We passed through some of them on our way to America. How different it'll be this time." She clasps her hands in front of her and rolls up her eyes to the ceiling.

"Y'know if I had the money I guess I'd go myself, you make it sound so good." Half hoping she'll ask me to go.

"Naw," she grunts. "You don't wanna go alone. It can be awful lonely in a strange place with no one to talk to.

But I keep forgetting you're not an old fogey like me; I bet you could find something to do over there, huh?" She winks at me again.

I'm only fifteen and don't have a real girl yet, but I shrug as though it were possible.

"That's why I sent Jack in town to the bank and the travel agency to plan things. I believe in planning things ahead of time."

'That's where I sent Jack,' she said. Well, that's another family joke. I mean the way she orders Jack around and everything. 'Jack, would you do this please? Jack, you don't want to bother with that, do ya? Jack, come here for a minute, please?' It's not that she yells at the guy or anything; in fact she's always civil to him, but I've never once seen him talk back to her, or not do something she told him.

He's a good soul anyway, no one ever has a bad word to say about Uncle Jack. He's short and a little chubby, with stringy fly-away hair and a bald spot that looks like a clearing in the jungle. A worse poker player you couldn't find if you looked a million years. Easy-going though, with a warm smile. I guess a guy like him wouldn't take being bossed around too seriously.

"Well," I says, shifting the hanger with the suit to the other hand. "I'd better be getting into town myself. Got to run an errand for Dad over to the button place. Take care now."

"Bye now. Give Teddy my regards; drop in again soon."

The glass door slams behind me and I stand in front of the plate glass window watching her dumpy figure waddle through the opening in the partition that separates the work area from the front.

She sees me watching her so she smiles and waves again, and I wave back and cross the street to wait for a Kenmore bus.

From there it's almost an hour to City Square in Charlestown for the buttons my father needs for upholstering, and then another twenty minutes to Washington Street near Haymarket where his place is.

I hang around in his shop for an hour or so reading magazines, waiting till he needs me for something. About a quarter to two the phone rings, and I look up from a year old copy of *Life* as my father picks up the receiver.

"Hello, Gertie, how . . ." There is a long pause, and I see his mouth tighten.

"Wait a minute, now, slower, Lillian called you . . . Yes . . .?

He's at the Peter Bent? What did they tell her?"

Another pause.

"Yes, I know where it is . . . of course, I'll be right over.
Where are you calling from Oh, then you're going to call everyone? . . . Maury's number? I have it here somewhere." He fumbles with the pages of his address book.

"Here it is: ASpinwall seven, five seven six oh. Got it? He should just be back from lunch. Don't worry now, Jack'll be all right; he's never been sick a day in his life. Yuh . . . I'll see you. Bye."

He puts the receiver gently in its cradle and sits looking blankly at the floor.

"What happened?"

"Jack collapsed in the store and was taken to the hospital. They say his condition is very poor. Funny they should take him to the Peter Bent when the store is across the street from Beth Israel." He still stares vacantly.

"Are we going there now?"

"Yes."

We take the car, and in a few minutes are on Storrow Drive along the Charles River, grey from the overcast which even now speckles the windshield with tiny drops of water.

"Imagine Gertie calling up the whole family," he says, passing a truck with "Schlitz Beer" on it in big red letters. "She must want a lot of company so we can all sit in the emergency ward with Lil and worry in style." He doesn't seem to quite believe it, though.

We finally pull into the parking lot in front of the hospital, and find a parking place among the late model cars with the green crosses on their backs. Through the front door it's all a strange world of starched white, rustling with businesslike steps along spotless corridors smelling of disinfectant. A nasal voice drones the names of doctors over a crackling loudspeaker.

In the emergency ward, an old nurse with steel-rimmed glasses points to a room far down the corridor. When we get there, a man in white is just coming out closing the door behind him. In his right hand he has a long strip of electrocardiograph paper loosely coiled like a tape measure. He holds it so loose that I can see the little black line dancing madly among the thin blue lines of the graph. The end of the strip droops down from the coil like a dog's tail, and on the tail I see that the dancing line now runs straight and even, and then stops where the paper ends in a jagged tear. I don't look up because I know already what he is going to say.

"Uh . . . I'm Doctor Pierce, and you're his . . ."

"Brother."

"Yes, well . . ." He crumples the tape absently. "I'm very sorry, but your brother passed on a while ago."

My father seems a bit confused. He looks around at the benches in the corridor with their dead-faced people waiting so long that they have stopped searching the face of every white uniformed employee.

And the ones with minor injuries sit giving dirty looks to the doctors and nurses who pass them by. A woman with excelsior hair and red cheeks says something real loud about having broken her thumb punching a broad in the Stage Bar in Scollay Square and if someone doesn't look at it already, she's gonna break the other one on some doctor's head.

My father doesn't seem to see what he's looking for, and he turns to the doctor again and opens his mouth but nothing comes out. He finally manages to ask what happened and the doctor mentions something about

a coronary thrombosis and how these things are so unpredictable.

Dad doesn't cry on the way home, but he drives very slowly and doesn't say anything. We call on the way so Ma will have supper ready.

For supper we eat broiled chicken wings, and while I am eating my Jello the phone rings and Dad answers. It seems that Lillian has gone to buy the coffin and make the arrangements, and she'll be at Uncle Maury's house about eight. My father promises to be there.

At eight fifteen we knock at the door and are let into a darkened living room. Lillian is sitting at a card table in the far corner. The only light in the room comes from a lamp with a white, frilly lampshade on the table. All around on the old fashioned carved furniture, sit the aunts and uncles.

Muted greetings are exchanged and my father walks over to Lillian. Putting a hand on her shoulder he asks what happened, and she stops snuffling and blows her nose with some Kleenex from a king-size box.

"I guess he's dead, that's all," she says, beginning to cry again.

"I mean how did it happen, what . . ."

"He came back from the bank, see, and went in back where I was running the sewing machine. He went to the toilet and about five minutes later he came out pulling up his pants and said, "Lil, I don't feel good," and then he threw up and fell over, straight, like a tree. I began to scream and scream but no one came into the store, and after a few minutes I got my senses back and phoned the hospital across the street. I got the emergency ward and told them that Jack was lying dying almost across the street and could they send an ambulance? The nurse asked if there was a doctor there, and I said no, and she said well there had to be a doctor in attendance to put in for the ambulance or they couldn't send one. Well, I began to scream again and I didn't know what to do. There's Jack lying on the floor unconcious, with his pants down, and his stomach jerkin' up and down and his face a funny color . . . It's a good thing this guy heard me yelling and came in. He saw Jack lying there and called the cops. They came and I told them to take him to the Peter Bent, and after a few minnutes they told me he was gone. I stepped on my glasses too," she says, fondling the twisted, empty frames.

And with that she lets out a wail and begins to cry again. My father pats her on the head and we go over and sit down on a sofa.

In the next half hour she has to tell the story at least four times, as people come in, and she bursts out crying again after each time, until, by the time Gertie comes a little after nine, it's a reflex or something, and she bursts out crying whenever the front door opens.

Gertie is the widow of my Father's brother who died in the Cocoanut

Grove fire in Nineteen forty-something. She's been hanging around with the family since then, playing in the hen poker games and so forth, but no one seems to mind.

Well, like I was saying, Gertie comes in the door and Lillian starts bawling, saying, "Oh Gert, what'll I do? I have to sleep alone now, like a horse!" and Gertie comes over, puts an arm around her, and says, "Yes, dear; that's right." And she oughta know. I have this sudden urge to laugh, the whole thing is so nutty, but I force myself to think of poor Jack.

Time passes and more people come, and Lillian cries some more. I guess all the women join in at some time or other. It's contagious with them. Well, by after ten, everybody is all cried out except Lillian, and the women gather around her to gossip and take her mind off her troubles. The men begin to discuss business and world affairs in their own little corner. At the end of the thing, about eleven thirty, it looks like an ordinary gathering except that there has been no card game. The funeral is scheduled for the next day, but as everyone begins to leave, I realize that for everyone except Lillian, Jack is already buried.

Outside, as we walk to our cars, I hear the women talking about how smart Lil was to get such a fancy casket so cheap. It seems like she got one with a lid in three sections, so you can reveal just the person's head, or with two sections up, all the way to the waist, I imagine you could see the feet, too, if you opened up all three.

Next day at the funeral chapel, I sit far back and listen to the wailing and sobbing coming from the front all through the eulogy and the prayers. When the time comes for everyone to file past the body I am near the end of the line, but Lillian is first and her wailing redoubles as she looks in the coffin.

"Oh, Jack! . . . he looks so good . . . so young . . . Jack, what did you do to me? . . . Get up, Jack . . . C'mon get up, please . . . Jack . . ."

But Jack just lies there and doesn't budge; for the first time, I'll bet.

This whole bit really tears everyone apart, and even some of the men are crying. But not me, I guess I'm for Jack.

We finally get this part of it over, and everyone gets in their cars and fall in line for the long drive behind the black hearse.

Of all things, the whole damn procession gets lost on the way to the cemetery, a new one I guess, and several times I see the sleek black limosine in front stop to ask directions.

After an extra half hour of wandering we get to the cemetery. They take the coffin out and put it on a rolling table-like thing, then wheel it into a little brick building. Lillian is crying about how Jack didn't want to

be buried in the cold ground, so that's why we got lost. Near the black family car, I see the funeral director in his black suit, shrugging his shoulders at the uncles besieging him about getting lost.

Once in the little building, two men start wheeling the coffin toward the rear exit to the lots. But Lillian starts yelling that she wants a last look at Jack, and runs after the coffin.

"Where you goin; Jack? Don't go away yet . . . take me with you."

The men stop, and with a little persuasion, one of them swings open an end section. Well, Lillian almost passes out because she's looking at his shiny brown shoes, and no socks either. She finally does get her last look, at his face. We all follow the coffin out to the open grave where she starts up again.

"Jack, what did you do to me? Jack . . ." And as they lower the coffin: "Good bye Jack . . . look everyone, say goodbye to Jack . . . What'm I gonna do?"

Finally the prayers and everything are over and we are getting into the car when my father says, "Why don't you stop by from school and spend a few minutes with her this week? She'll be very lonely and having a younger person may cheer her up."

I consent, even though I don't much relish the idea, so that Monday at three, I am in the back of the store talking to her as she runs the old foot pedal sewing machine. We talk about nothing and everything, with long silences for punctuation.

Then the bell in front jangles as someone opens the door, and her face lights up, as she leans quickly to look out the opening in the partition. Her face falls again when she sees that it's only a fat woman carrying a pair of pants crumpled up like a dishrag.

Lillian gets up wearily and goes to the counter. There is a brief, muffled exchange. She comes back with two one dollar bills in her hand, and sits down in front of the machine again looking very thoughtful.

"They're all so nice," she says. "Her husband was in yesterday to offer his sympathy. A real nice man. But both times I thought it might be . . . But I guess not. Then she looks down at the money in her hand and then at me. "You know, with Jack's insurance and everything, I have over seventy thousand dollars." She puts the two crumpled bills on the top of the sewing machine and stares at them for a minute.

After a long silence, she tells me I'd better go see my girlfriend, and smiles. I say good bye and walk through the front and out the tinkling door. I stand for a moment on the sidewalk and watch the people rush blindly past the little shop.

MARCH

Steve Orlen

In retrospect, when your
Dark memory has left,
We'll call you Mother;
For 'neath your rotting crust
Lay curled the hope.

"WHORES SAY THEIR PRAYERS"

Paul E. Theroux

Whores say their prayers
On rosaries of ovaries,
With unfertile agates
They squat in a ring,
Each fingering the globes (reaching
For the silver glinting at the crux);
Their faith in touch,
They press on.

You Can't Let Your Friends Down

by Robert J. Mastrodomenico

There was a sharp metallic click as the key turned the tumblers in the lock. The door swung open and a man stepped into the dazzling white of the room. There was no sound, save the clatter of the mop against the bucket as he carefully shut the door behind him.

He set the mop and bucket on the gleaming marble floor and listened carefully until the lights of the morgue dimmed as the huge refrigerating device switched on. There was a barely discernable hum and then the whine of giant motors worked into a steady pitch as the unit came alive. The giant blades of the circulators fluttered and then began their smooth revolutions whipping enormous quantities of air into the intricate system of ducts.

Harold Brackett did not move until he was sure that everything was working to perfection. For perfection was one of Harold Brackett's by-words.

Harold's footsteps echoed through the morgue as he walked down the marble corridior. They seemed to spring up from his heels and throw themselves at the gleaming white walls, and then bound back again to the floor, only to be hurled once again into space where they were lost forever.

Harold thought quite frequently about the echo of his footsteps. They were, to him, entities, not just sounds. One day they were voices of the dead crying out for help and solace; and the next, the voices of reassurance crying to the living, "Fear not, fear not; death is coming."

Today he was disturbed. The echoes reverberated through the corridor with a fury he had not noticed before. They hurled themselves at the floor. Finding no vulnerable spot there, they renewed their efforts on the walls and ceilings. They faded into obscurity slower today. He stopped quickly and listened. The last echo of his footsteps died in the darkness of the far corner of the hall. He stood there with his head cocked to one side and a faint smile on his crooked lips.

"Caught you, didn't I", he wheezed. "You think no one can hear you trying to get out. But I can!" He released his grip on the mop and bucket and they clattered to the floor. His voice rose to a whining anger. "You fools! You are at peace now. Why change things? Stay at peace!"

The huge blades stopped their swishing revolutions and died with one last flutter. The last blast of cooled air was forced into the ducts and the metal sides popped and buckled as the warm air of the building expanded them.

He picked up his tools and walked to the large room full of drawers. There he filled his pail with water and disinfectant and settled down to work. One by one he rolled out the drawers and washed the bodies down with the solution.

For fifteen years this had been his life; not just his job but his life. Off in a corner of the building was an old supply closet that he had converted into a room. There he slept and on his day off sat in his rocking chair. All day long he sat in the chair gently rocking off into space; thinking and staring.

Harold was not a lonely man. On the contrary, he had many friends. All the occupants of the morgue were Harold's friends. Some days Harold's list of friends exceeded thirty or forty, other days the list dwindled to nine or ten. On these days Harold felt quite lonely.

There was one friend Harold could always count on however. This was Eddie. Eddie was Harold's only connection with the world of the living. Every day on his lunch hour Eddie would come in and talk with Harold. He was a dishwasher at a luncheonette down the street and Harold was his only friend.

Today Harold was lonely. There had been no deliveries to the morgue.

"You know Edward", Harold said, "I sometimes think you are the only real friend I have. I can't depend on my other friends at all. Why, just last week I had thirty-six in one day. And this week only twelve have bothered with me. But you . . . you Edward, every day you come in and have a chat with me. You're really quite nice to bother with me at all. And you wait and see, some day I'll repay your kindness."

"Aw shucks, Mister Brackett", Eddie replied as he squirmed with embarrassment. "Thas on account of it's my lunch hour. An' besides you're nice to me an' don't make fun of me like the others do. You unnerstand me Mister Brackett. You help me with lots of things. Why whenever I got troubles I says to myself, Eddie, go see Mister Brackett. He'll help ya." A broad smile creased Eddie's face. "You never let me down."

The wrinkled little man smiled and patted Eddie on the shoulder. "No

Eddie, I've never let you down and I never will. After all, you're my friend and you can't let your friends down."

At quarter to six Eddie left for work and Harold retired to his room and his rocking chair.

It wasn't unusual that Harold should think about death. It was all around him. He took care of the dead. He catered to them. But, to him, there was no death. It was only a name given to a state of being. Dead people listened but did not speak. They heard, they felt like all the rest. They were his friends; they were the happy people.

They were truly his friends. They never said an unkind word to him, never hurt his feelings, and never made a bother of themselves. They were the only people in the world besides Eddie who would listen to him and not laugh. He poured forth all his ideas to them, taught them all he knew and believed in . . . and they listened.

They were the happy people because they had no worries, no cares. They could feel neither pain nor sorrow. But Harold was certain they could feel happiness and joy.

"Poor Eddie", Harold thought. "He doesn't deserve all the sadness he has known in life. He has faults just like everyone else, but he isn't responsible for them. He's been given an inferior brain. He's not as smart as other people. But he's good and that's all that really matters."

According to Harold all people were either good or bad. It wasn't just their actions that proved whether they were good or bad. Some people like Eddie, weren't responsible for what they did. But deep inside they were basically good or bad. It showed through every time. No matter how hard someone tried to cover it up, it couldn't be done. Eddie's goodness was like that. He was an alcoholic and a chronic gambler. People called him a bum and a drunk, but they were wrong. Eddie wasn't anything like that. He was a hard working man who was good and kind. His faults glared in the light of investigation, but underneath it all there was a goodness which was hidden and had to be searched for. That's what was wrong with people. They were too lazy to bother to search for the good points in a man. They were content to sit back and pick out his faults. And all the time they don't even bother to look at themselves.

That was it! Eddie was a scapegoat for their own faults which they refused to see. He was the one who got beat up and rolled twice a week. He was the one who was taunted and laughed at. All this made up for their own weaknesses.

Now they weren't even going to let Eddie enjoy what little he had.

They're not content to badger him and beat him and rob him, they want to put him away in an institution.

Harold turned and directed his glance toward the doorway and the morgue. "Yes, you don't know how well off you really are. Look at what is happening to poor Eddie. That can never happen to you. No pain, no worry; just deep relaxing sleep. And still you aren't satisfied. Why? Do you want to go back to the other life? You are fools, even in death. People are never satisfied. They want what is beyond their reach and then when they get it, they decide that they don't really want it after all. You're really quite foolish to want to give this all up. Look at Eddie, he's alive and very unhappy. He's never done a thing to anyone, never bothered a soul. What is he getting for it? Horrible beatings, robbed of his hard-earned money, ugly names. They even want to put him away and still he doesn't bother anyone with his troubles. That's how good he really is. With all his troubles he refuses to bother anyone. I'm actually letting him down. I spend all my time with you. You don't need me. You're quite comfortable as you are. Eddie is the one who needs help, not you."

By the time Harold had finished his chores it was time for tea and bed. He was deep in thought when someone knocked at the door to his room. At first he didn't hear it. The second knock roused him from his thoughts and he raised himself out of his rocking chair. There at the door stood Eddie.

"Edward, how good to see you", he smiled. "Why I've just been thinking about you."

Eddie looked at him dazedly. His lips barely seemed to move.

"They're goin' to do it, Mister Brackett. They made me go to a doctor today, a head doctor. They're goin' to lock me up in a nut house. I ain't done nuthin' to no one. I ain't goin' Mister Brackett. You gotta help me! I don't know what to do."

Harold smiled. At last, Eddie had come for help. It was time to help one of the living.

He turned and helped Eddie to a chair. The words came quickly and calmly. "Now Edward, you must keep calm. First we must be sure. You are sure of this?"

Eddie's head nodded wildly. "They brought me to a doctor. They took me right away from work. They *made* me go! The doctor asked me all sorts of questions. I didn't know what t' say. He asked me about drinkin' an' gamblin' an' gettin' beat up. I didn't know what t' say. All the time my sister sat there sayin', 'Eddie, now tell the doctor the truth. That's the best thing t' do; tell the truth.' You know me Mister Brackett,

I ain't so smart as they are. I tried t' lie, but my sister kept sayin', 'Now Eddie that ain't so. The doctor can't help you unless you tell the truth.' " His face clouded and he curled his lips. "They wasn't tryin' t' help me. They want t' put me away!"

Harold rose from his chair and went to the hot plate where his tea was brewing. "Yes, Edward, I'll help you. It's all so easy. Don't you worry they won't hurt you. You can stay with me. I only wish you had come sooner. Now have a hot cup of tea and relax. Relaxation is the answer to all your problems."

He poured the water into a cracked mug and placed a tea bag in it. Then he went to a make-shift shelf and took down a jar. Unscrewing the cap, he said, "Now this will give the tea just the right flavor." He handed the tea to Eddie and watched as he raised the mug and sipped the hot liquid. Eddie's face twisted into a grimace.

"Now I know it's bitter, Edward, Harold cooed, "but drink it all. It'll help you relax. There that's right, now go and lie down and when you wake up all your troubles will be gone."

The next morning Harold Brackett woke up as usual and made his rounds of the morgue. He picked up his pail and set off to wash bodies. He was in a particularly good mood. As his heels clicked on the marble floor he whistled merrily.

He looked at the tag on the big toe of his first friend. "Hmmmmmm," he thought to himself. John Doe, three a.m., death due to exposure. John Doe, that will never do. Alfred . . . that's it . . . we'll call you Alfred. That's quite an honor you know. My father's name was Alfred. I expect we'll be quite friendly."

At the next drawer he stopped and looked at the name plate. "I must remember to put a tag on this one. A man without a name will never do around here. It wouldn't be proper."

He opened the drawer and peered inside. "Hello there Edward, did you have a restful night?" The face of his friend stared up at him pouting through twisted lips. "I told you I'd help you. They can't bother you now. That's the trouble with so many of my friends, they wait so long to come for help. You should have come sooner Edward."

"Wait a moment", he exclaimed. "That will never do." He turned and opened the drawer again and studied the painful expression on Eddie's face. "No, no, that will never do. I won't have my friends looking unhappy!"

He reached into the drawer and tweaked the corner of Eddie's mouth into a smile.

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CÆSURA POLICY —

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"In the Here and Now"

by Steve Orlen

Folks in these parts will remember '88 as the year of the blizzard that all but swept New England off the map, but I'll remember that year for another reason, for in 1888 I first met Miss Polly Wonson.

I had returned late that autumn for my second term at "Aggie" glad to get away from a back-breaking and unprofitable summer at home on the farm. Since village life in the summer isn't very stimulating for young men bent on sowing their wild oats, the first weeks at school were hell-raising ones. There were the traditional freshmen-upperclass rope pulls across campus pond in which my side invariably got dunked in the mud, the back-slapping, thigh-swatting yarn swaps at midnight beer parties, and freshmen hazing. There was also the annual, and usually uneventful, opening convocation with a long-winded speech by President Titus Winsted. But that year's convocation did prove to be eventful; as a matter of fact, the boys nearly tore down the grey stone walls of Old Chapel.

We sat slumped in the dusty pews unsuccessfully seeking comfort from the hard, varnished pine, and perspiring in the rays of the early October sun which streamed in through the high-arched gothic windows. Black flies droned around my head and President Winsted's nasal monotone droned in my ears. Most of us were drifting into a half awareness when, somewhere towards the middle of his address, the President said casually, as if he were simply informing us that a new course had been added to the schedule, ". . . and by the way, gentlemen, the board of trustees has decided that this year women will be permitted to enter this institution as two-year students." He never did get to finish that speech.

Old Titus was true to his word, for within two weeks, one by one, there arrived on our campus a quartet of females, a bit wary, I must say, of their welcoming receptions.

Here were four honest-to-goodness American girls to brighten up the lives of sixty-seven manure-smelling Yankee farm boys caught in the daily struggles of pomology, geography, dairy management, and "the *art* of draining and irrigation."

Christie Austin was the first to arrive, but to our disappointment she was a plain, scholarly little Quaker girl who appeared always in a dark, close-fitting bonnet and a floor-duster dress.

Next came Ginny Duncan and Mellissa Child. They were all right, except Ginny fancied herself to be one cut above the rest of us — a society *debutante*. Her father, a wealthy farmer from up the valley, was a mem-

ber of the state legislature so she was pretty much monopolized by the Boston boys. Mellie was from my home town and I had known her most of my life, so she too was out of the running for me.

Anyways, I didn't have the spare time nor money to be girl-gadding. The crop at home had been a poor one that year, so I took a part-time job for room and board with Henry Chesterton, a farmer who lived about a mile down the road from campus. I'd have to wait a bit longer to meet the girl for me, I figured. Mother, God rest her, told me once — I remember her words, for she never spoke just to hear herself talk — "You'll know when she comes, Sam'l. They'll be a hurtin' in your heart, and the whole world'll just disappear in the light of day." I was soon to discover how true those words were, for Polly arrived at Aggie.

She came in like the spring buds, young, happy and eager to live, to find out in her own peculiar way what the world was all about. When she first walked, or rather, nearly floated, into geography class and took a seat in the next row, I knew right then that something strange was taking place in my life. Old Mr. Morgan's voice sounded as far away to me as the countries he was discussing in his lecture. I just stared unashamedly, my chin set in my hands, at the girl with the robins in the gray of her dress who sat with her long fingers clasped on the desk. She was the prettiest girl I had ever laid eyes on.

After that first day, I kept a constant lookout for her: I haunted the ice cream parlor in town, but all I ever found there were Ginny and Mellissa surrounded by a half-dozen would-be beaus acting like a bunch of speculators at the County Fair horse auction; I wandered around campus after classes got over, and I went to study hall in the evenings instead of staying in my room where I belonged, but Polly was nowhere to be seen. The only place I could find her was in geography class at nine o'clock on Monday and Wednesday mornings, and I didn't dare go near her then. So I limited my courting to staring — and stare I did, but it got me nowhere. She just sat there like a model student, watching the teacher and fingering her pencil on the desk. But she never took many notes like the rest of us, nor did she ever turn around to acknowledge my stare. She paid attention to the lectures and answered questions real proper like when asked, but it seemed as if she wasn't really there, as if she were somewhere in another world, a world of her own — I thought. I guess it was her eyes — they were always misty-wet and had a far-away look.

To my advantage, the other boys kind of ignored her. They were too busy drilling on the green in front of Old Chapel and showing off their silly wooden guns to Ginny Duncan to take much notice of the strange,

quiet girl with the dreamy eyes. She later told me that her eyes were the color of "yellow violets when the green streaks come in summertime." And in my eyes she did become a flower. She was tall and stately as the meadowrue and her hair was thick and golden as unmown hay in the morning sun. She never wore it like the other girls — Ginny affecting the big-city styles, and Christie and Mellissa braiding it up in tight knots about the head. Polly kept it "natur'l," as she called it, down and streaming after her in the wind.

I remember well the first time I spoke to her. It was a mid-October day — the kind you can't easily forget. There had been a long cold spell during which the farmers in the valley had begun to set up for winter: wood chopping and fence mending had started, the hogs were being fattened for slaughter, and the house foundation was banked with hay. But that day — a Saturday it was — there was a break in the weather, a serene Indian summer break. I was in the upland pasture mending the wall where last winter's frost heaves had tumbled out some of the heavier foundation boulders.

The sky was a huge, open expanse of blue, and thin wisps of a large mountain of fluffy clouds were breaking off in the upper wind. The distant hills were shrouded in a smokey haze. The welcome sun lit up the somber woods, flooded the dying leaves with one last spark of life. The whole countryside, which had settled down to sleep for winter, came awake for the one day and smiled — quietly and serenely with a dignity only nature can bestow. That midday sun soaked through my winter jacket and the sweat tickled down my body, so I took a breather and a pipeful under one of the many clumps of paper birches scattered throughout the broad, hilly pasture. But for a lone dog yapping in the distant woods, the air was so still and peaceful you could hear an apple if it dropped in the nearby orchard.

And then I spied Polly, running freely through the tall grass like a child of God without a care in the world. Her light hair danced behind her as she ran and she had a bunch of bright yellow asters clutched in her outstretched hand. When she noticed me lazing under the tree, she stopped abruptly about thirty feet away and took a slow, cautious look around. Smiling shyly, she rubbed at her nose with her fist and lowered her eyes to her mud-spattered feet.

"Howdy, Miss Polly," I said for a starter. "Whyn't you c'mon over and set for a spell?" She came forward, the asters thrust out in front of her as if to lead the way. She cocked her head and smiled down at me as if she had known me well all along.

"Hello, Samuel," she said. Her voice had the lilting quality of the white-throat's — soft and quiet, but alive, something to give meaning to the stillness of the day. I knew right then that this was the girl Mom had prepared me for. My heart was pumping like the lead horse on an open stretch, and all I could see was Polly standing there in front of me — a lone cloud in a patch of blue. She had actually remembered my name!

"I didn't think you'd remember my name," I said. She swished the bottom of her dress and sat down next to me, crossing her legs Indian fashion.

"Well, sure I do! How could I forget? You're the boy in geography class who stares at me all the time from behind that scraggly black beard."

The blood rose to my face. I leaned over and fidgeted with my boot ties. She threw her head back and laughed — good-naturedly, with her eyes and mouth wide open and her hair falling softly on her shoulders. It was all right again.

"You're like a little boy, you know. Even with that there beard, you're just like a little boy." Again, I couldn't think of an appropriate reply, so I kept silent, so as to appear philosophical; I had been told that young ladies were rather impressed by that.

"You're a farm boy," she declared finally, just when I was about to drop the pose and say something. "Must like it a heap to work it on Sat'days too."

"Heck no! This's just a means of eatin'."

"Oh . . . I see." She nervously plucked the small yellow petals from an aster and blew them off to flutter in the air. Now it was my turn to save her embarrassment, to reach into her private world and bring her back beside me.

"You don't look like no farm girl to me. Otherwise you'd have some shoes on your feet. It's gettin' on to winter, you know. You'll get frost-bit."

"I guess maybe so."

More silence. Things weren't going the way I hoped they would, so I fumbled for another straw to find which way the wind was blowing.

"Say, where you from, Miss Polly?"

"Darn it, I'm *Polly,* not *Miss* Polly and I'm from Boston. Father's in wool there. He always wanted to be a farmer — like you — but Mother wouldn't 'low it. She's a Boylston, you know. Wouldn't have her kids brought up hicks, she always said. So, Papa stayed a merchant and took us kids for rides out to the country on Sundays. Sundays always was my favorite day." She was bubbling over like a kettle set to boil and went on

like that without hardly stopping for a breath of air for pretty near two hours, having found a fascinated ear. She told me about her sisters, Emma, Carrie, and Harriet, and what little fools she thought they were; and Sunday afternoons; and Boston, and strolls with her father through the sights and smells of Haymarket Square; rides to Swampscott on the open trolley cars; and the powerful, but soothing voice of the organ on Sunday mornings in the Congregational Church. She smiled with reminiscent delight as she told how her papa used to come up to her room at night, tuck her in real tight the way she liked, and tell wonderful stories about his childhood on a small farm in Vermont. He gave her a love and second-hand knowledge of country living, the trees and wild flowers, the old plank bridges over the creeks, and the dusty roads that follow the sun — all the things that I took for granted. I realized then why she was never to be found where the rest of the people at school spent their time — she stayed here, to roam as the spirit moved her, to discover the delights and the mysteries of the fields and woods that her father had spoken about.

Before we knew it, the sun was disappearing behind the hills and she was already late for supper. She got up to go, and I asked her if she didn't think I was being too forward, would she consent to go to church with me tomorrow morning. She accepted with a smile and a quick curtsy, gathered what was left of her flowers and was gone, skipping down the muddy path to follow the sun over the horizon.

Next morning, all got up in my Sunday best, I called on her at the Minister's house where the girls lived, and we walked to the church in town. I sure was proud of Polly, with her Boston-town Sunday dress and her black leather shoes with the genuine silver buckles. I figured we made quite a handsome couple, even though I needed a haircut and my jacket had a patch on at the elbow. After the service, we had a lunch of ice cream at the soda parlor and spent the afternoon walking in the woods near campus.

We got along fine, and most of that winter and into spring we went to church on Sunday mornings. I went mainly to feel her nearness in the pew, and she said she went to hear the organ played by Henry Chesterton's wife, Rachel. Polly had some real peculiar ways of believing in God, ways that I had never heard before. She told me that God dwelt in the organ whenever someone pulled out the stops, or in the rooster's throat when he crowed out the dawn of a brand new day.

In the afternoons, we'd go for long walks in the snow, or for rides in the Chesterton's sleigh, all bundled up in warm woolen blankets. We skated on the Connecticut, built snow castles, and, when it became too

cold to stay out, we sat in study hall watching the black stove eat up the crackling wood.

My classmates began to tease me about seeing her so often; they figured she was a little loony because she kept so much to herself. They were probably just jealous because she took no notice of their goings on. They even said I was bewitched by "that strange one," as they called her. And I guess maybe I was — I was crazy in love and confused as all get out. It was rare that I could cut through that cloak of dreamy silence to discover what went on in her head. I was used to folks showing what they thought on their faces, in their words and actions. But not so with Polly. Her moods were inconsistent: one minute she'd be babbling on about how much she loved the world, and the next, she'd cut herself off from me and that very same world.

On Sunday evenings, when the light from the oil lamp flickered on my bedroom walls, and the snow fell steadily outside the window, I would lie in my bunk propped up on the goosedown pillow smoking my last pipeful, and wait for sleep to meet exhaustion. During those peaceful, melancholy moments, I would rattle my brains over the strange little child of nature with whom I had spent the day. I loved her — of that I was sure; or rather I was captivated by her — by her warm smells and soft smiles and devil-take-the-consequence giggles, by her animal grace, her gestures and her movements, by the way she opened wide her full lips and misty eyes when she was surprised, and even by the long silences which separated us so often. But how did she feel about me? Was I included in her world — her world of silence, of dreams, of intense, inward passions? She seemed to be stubbornly resisting me and the life around us, yet reaching for us with every gesture. I knew she wasn't really mine, that she was unpossessable . . . or maybe she belonged to the universe, to the stars which she yearned for, or to the woods where she spent so much time wandering alone or with me. I would be patient, I thought, I must wait.

I didn't get to see her much in February or in early March. A series of grey, exacting storms and a blizzard kept us busy packing the snow to keep the roads open; the firewood had to be hauled down from the wood lot; Mason Chesterton, Henry's brother, hired me to cut ice; then before we knew it, the sap started to flow in the maple grove.

Then came April and Spring with a burst of green buds and Polly seemed to come out of her shell a bit. She laughed a lot at silly little things, she skipped and bubbled, and most important — she talked more — some with her eyes and some with words. We went fishing when the ice had cleared off the brooks, we searched for the first signs of ginger and the

wake-robin that grew near the swamp, and we walked up to the Holyoke Notch to take a try at Mt. Nornottuck, but the snow hadn't receded enough for us to get very high.

In mid-April when the roads were traversable, Mr. Chesterton left me in charge of the place and took his wife and children off to Boston to visit with relatives for a week. On Sunday, Polly and I had an early season picnic up on the hillside overlooking the barn. She brought the sandwiches, cucumber pickles and a deep-dish apple pie, and I brought a jug of fresh milk. We were so absorbed in the little pleasures of the spring breezes and the smells they carried that we didn't notice the clouds building up in the sky. The rain came down all of a sudden, cleansing the earth of the winter rot, large drops, swollen by the wind, piercing the very vitals of the earth. Blankets, dishes and food in hand, we ran helter-skelter down the slippery hillside to the shelter of the barn. We flew in through the huge door and threw ourselves down laughing on the maple board bench to catch our breath and watch the rain spatter in the gathering puddles. The barn smelled hot of hay and was pungent from the wet dung underneath the floor boards. An indignant rooster protested and two hens waddled around us, squawking at the interruption.

Polly didn't know much of barns, so I took her on the grand tour. She followed excitedly into the small shed which separates the main barn from the back kitchen and there she discovered the culch pile. Being a collector of all kinds of curious items, she was enchanted and amazed at "all the beautiful junk you farmers save." Among other things, there were spools of rusty wire, tobacco tins filled with assorted nails and screws, bent horseshoes, a box of glazing points, a broken churn, and dried out mouse bodies in smooth glass jars. She stepped courageously through the culch in her bare feet and rummaged with all the calm authority of the experienced junk collector. She finally came up grinning with a twisted bird cage in her hands.

"I'm glad this old cage is busted!" she said triumphantly, smudging her nose with a dirty fist.

"Why's that?"

" 'Cause birds are born to be free — to fly free on the wind — and make their homes where they darn well please. They get claustrophobia just cooped up in a metal cage!"

"Heck, what's a bird know? Treat 'em good, feed 'em when they're hungry and don't bother 'em come mating season, and they'll be happy as the day is long." She grumbled a little, threw me a disapproving frown and flung the cage back into the corner.

We returned half-heartedly to the main barn, up the ladder to the loft, and through the narrow passageway where the rafters meet over the carriage shed. We scurried like mice among the old silken spider webs that hung in the dust, around the ell, and down through the trap door to land, both of us sneezing, in the back of the old democrat. Tired, wet, and sniffling, we found our way up the stairs to my room, tacked onto the end of the barn.

"Here's a towel to dry your hair with," I said, shucking my wet boots and jacket. I started a fire in the small stove.

"Hey, Sam. Got any dry clothes I can wear? Mine are soaked clean through." I tossed her my red-checkered shirt and brown overalls. At her bidding, I looked out the window at the two cloud covered mountains in the distance while she changed. The wind-driven rain spattered insistently on the roof.

We sat together on the bunk in the darkening room and talked of my plans for the future. A strange smile parting her lips, she stared at the flames leaping through the grate, wrapping their yellow tongues around the thin black bars.

"Polly listen. Someday I'll have a farm like this, a big farm — one with apple orchards, and hogs fat as can be, with woods and big open fields, and a house bigger even than this one. Why, there'll be so many rooms in it that a body'd get lost just countin' 'em." She snuggled restlessly into her knees, rubbing her small nose on the trousers.

"Polly, you ain't listening!"

"I sure am," she whispered into her knees.

"Well, with a farm like that, I'm gonna need someone to —"

She closed her warm hand over my mouth and purred softly. Her eyes were soft and misty, but glowing fiercely, obstinately. She kissed me.

"No-o. Not now," she whispered. "Don't ruin it. Live in the here and now." With that, she wrapped her arms around me and pushed me back on the blankets. The tree shadows from outside played funny on the walls and her hair smelled so pretty in the musty of my room. Night entered my room and the dark walls closed in on us.

It was two weeks later before the rains stopped and the earth came out from the grey shadows and smiled at the bright sun. Polly and I skipped in the morning-wet meadow by the river picking the first bluettes. We strolled along the River Road to watch the college sculling team practice. Polly liked to watch the smooth rhythmical motions of the crew as they skimmed like whirligigs across the top of the water. We sat down on one of the concrete benches under the branches of a huge elm tree which leaned out over the shallows, and listened to the coxswain sing out the cadences.

"Polly," I said, placing her hands on my knees, "it's gettin' on towards final exams and summer'll be here before we know it, and I figured it was about time we talked about . . . Well, it's time we talked over the future. You know —" I couldn't get up the words. My hands were sweating, my head was swimming from the heat and all I could hear was that guy yelling "one, two, three, four, one, two, pul-ll, four . . ."

She wasn't helping me any. She knew what I was trying to say. But she kept silent, rubbing at her nose with her fist like she always did when something was troubling her. Her face was expressionless. She gazed over my shoulder into the woods. Go! I thought. Run into those woods! Hide in the trees, little girl, hide from me and everything else!

"Polly, I want you to be my wife," I blurted out, finally.

She wrinkled up her forehead and a quizzical look drew her eyes half shut.

"Oh, Sam . . ." She took her hands from mine and folded them neatly in her lap. "I can't marry now. You see —" she faltered. "Can't you understand?"

"No. I can't understand. I'll try, but I can't understand. I love you, and I thought you loved me — at least you seemed to."

"Yes, I know. Yes, I do love you. But I love you . . . well, like I love the paper birches, and the way the creek roars in spring and whispers in the summertime." Her face bobbed in and out of the laced shadows of the tree and her greenish eyes blinked from the harsh sunlight. "I love you like these bluettes, and the wet pastures when I can take off my shoes and woosh through the tall grass, and like the organ in the church and the silence that follows."

I sat silent, staring at the two eyes of her white collar button. I tried — I tried harder than I ever did before, but still I couldn't understand.

"Please know what I mean! I been cooped up in this world so long, I just want to be free!" Her eyes pleaded for understanding. "Ple-ease! Please understand . . ." Again that gesture — she rubbed her nose, and the tears gathered in her eyes. She got up, clutching the bottom of her skirts, and ran down the muddy road, through the meadow, over the stone wall, and off into the echoing woods.

The next day I received a letter from my younger brother telling that my father had passed away and would I come home as soon as possible. I got excused from my exams, packed my bags, and took the train home. I didn't return to school the next term — a farm the size of ours needed more than a sixteen-year-old boy and a woman to run it. I wrote Polly at her home in Boston during the summer and at school in the fall. She never answered. And I never saw her again.

A QUARTET FOR THE SEASONS

N. C. Bowler

I

A drum taut tide
Of shiny black umbrellas
Bursts between iron gates
Upon the stone walled yard
And rushes under the rain
To the sheltering indoors
As if to avert some evil
That is washed from the sky.
And the rain runs off
The black shiny umbrellas
Falls to the silver walks
And flows to bits of grass
Growing green in the cracks.

II

The Pacific
Rolls warm and green
On brown bouldered
Promontories.
A single fir
Stands tall above
The swirling surge
A beacon for
Ships a roost for
Silent eagles.
Then darkness comes
And westward in
Warm Pacific nights a
Solitary spire
Points above the sea
Silver-blue not
Of earth but
Something of the stars.

III

A long darting
Blackbird ribbon
Slithers between
Orange trees and
Pours over an
Apple top hill
Streams across a
Yellow meadow
And screaming
Piles upon a bare
Sycamore.
And
For a moment black
Against evening red
The tree is leaved
Anew with life
But soon swirling in
A rush of wings the
Birds are gone again.

IV

A grey ashen
Snow sifts on green park
Benches where old sparrow
Feeders sat on warm nights,
And disfigures the statue
Of Jeanne d'Arc which graces
The swan pond's west corner.
It lumps on dry fountains
Sets the sundial off its
Hour and smothers paths and food
For pigeons who nod and poke
About, with three-toed feet,
Criss-cross tracks in the snow.

MAKING A GROTTO

Deidre M. Consolati

Three children scan a shaggy hill
A space between the stones, a crag to seek.
They risk the rock soled steep to find
A soul's space in the rock.

Fervent fingers
Undress the sheltered crack
Unwrap the wrappings of the leaves that cling
Like linens of the dead.

A trinity of trees bestows
A soft green life on waiting choir.
And piece by piece the moss becomes
A carpet in the rock.

The tiny worshippers
Bow down. And from his pocket one withdraws
A wooden cross and leans it high
Upon the moss.
Their young prayers done, they file home.

All The Cool Streams

by Maurice Cocchi

I watched the water run white from under the bridge, rushing over the beer to make it cool and hiding the stones below that were slippery and cold and dark green.

It was five years and I had not seen Jimmy since he left in the night on the motorcycle, since the night on the farm down the road when it was black outside with the wind blowing and the old man drunk and lying in the driveway. Ten years ago I fished whole days in the pool below the bridge with a rod that Jimmy made for me the winter before and gave to me in the spring. And now when the farm was no longer home and I was ready to search all the cool streams of the land and the world and probably never see this one again, I had come for the one last time to think of all the other times I had stood on the bank close to the water that flowed cold and sweet in those years and would flow forever past the bridge and down to the wide river.

When I looked at the stream, it did not seem long ago that I had fished here and watched the water run to the river, and to the sea, and then to the whole world and come back in the spring to make the land alive and green and good for another year. In the summer, the water came to cool the hot brown dust, and cleanse the land and make it green after a storm and the air pure, and good and cool to breathe. Then in the fall came to knock the leaves from the trees, and pack them close to the earth for

warmth in the winter, so that life could flow forever from the soil. And in the winter came as snow, to cover the leaves that fell with the rain in the fall, and covered the life that returned each spring to make the heart feel good, and old men revive with the hope of young men and young men to have hearts as large as the whole world. And made the river run high, and the brook high into the river, and the fish return again from the gray sea to the sweet water of the streams in spring.

Thinking back to when I had lived on the farm, it seemed that I had spent all my time fishing here and other places in the brook for the fish that weren't always large but were fun to catch with Jimmy's rod.

In the winter I remember watching Jimmy scrape the old varnish from the rod. From the side I watched as he carefully removed the ferrules and re-cemented them, and then for a long time wound blue thread around the guides and added on the end of each winding a thin strip of white silk thread. Finally, he added the varnish that would make the rod look smooth and shiny brown. When the light was right you could see your reflection in it.

"Jimmy, who are you making that for?"

"I can't tell ya. Ya talk too much."

"I won't tell anyone."

"You'd tell the whole world." He said this without looking up from the rod he was working up.

"It's too good to keep a secret, but I won't tell anyone if you tell me."

"I can't tell ya. When you're older I'll make ya a rod like this, but you're too young now and you'd break it, sure as hell. What color windings do you want on your rod when I make it for ya."

"Blue, with white trim, and a fancy design right above the handle."

"All right, someday ya can have one, but you're too young now, and too dumb. You'd break it for sure."

That spring I got the bamboo rod for my birthday. I was happy and fished carefully and caught a lot of fish in this pool below the bridge. I would go in the summer mornings when the grass was still wet and the air cool. The water looked deep and cool, and you could not see to the bottom in the summer. With a white gob of worms on the end of the line, I would watch the line in the water as well as I could. I could just barely see the white worms, and sometimes the dark moving forms of fish, and by watching carefully I could see the worms disappear into the fish's mouth and I could tell that I had a bite before the line started to move. Then I would pull the fish splashing from the water onto the bank and get excited if he was big and run home down the road.

Because the brook ran into the river, and the fish ran up the brook from the river, there were many different kinds of fish in the brook, and I never knew what kind I would catch when I went fishing to the pool. In the spring I would get trout, sometimes, and then later in the summer bullheads and pickerel and a lot of perch that were small, and then in the fall I might catch trout again.

This was where my brother first taught me about fishing. I learned the names of all the fish that ran in the brook, and he showed me how to tie different knots that were strong, and gave me leader material and hooks when I did not have any so that I could catch these fish. After that, I fished here, always alone, and got to know where the roots underwater were, where the stones lay that caught my line if I let the worm sink all the way to the bottom, and where the fish were most likely to be when the water was high and when it was low. Early in the spring I could learn about these things, because before the leaves came out and shut off the sunlight from the pool, I could climb a tree and go out on a branch over the water and see everything clearly down below on the bottom. I could see suckers in the water, lined up in rows along the bottom where nymphs, that looked like pieces of leaves and twigs, were carried into the pool. The nymphs would bounce along the bottom with the current until they came to the fish. The fish would rise a little with their mouths open and the nymphs would disappear, and then the fish would settle to the bottom again until some more of the dark woody-looking nymphs came in with the current. It seemed that the nymphs were swallowed with no effort, and sometimes you wondered if they really had been swallowed and had not just slipped by the fish under their bellies or over their dark bodies where you could not see them. A few times while I was looking from the tree this way I saw trout. They were always exciting to see because they moved so quickly, and their bodies looked dark while their fins were white at the edges, and you could see these fins moving along with their gills and tails in the current so they could keep their balance. When I saw the trout my heart would beat faster, and I would climb down from the tree and run home to get my rod.

Ma was usually in the kitchen when I came home from fishing, and one day she started talking about Jimmy.

"I guess you won't be seeing Jim for a while," she said. "He's off in jail now. He took somebody's car over in the next town and the cops got him. I don't know just when he'll be home again. You're old man is going to be hard to live with when he finds out tonight."

Lately Jimmy had been fighting a lot with the old man, and was getting

home late at night or not at all once in a while, but we had just gone fishing down in the river a week ago, and everything seemed all right then. Now it was hard to think that I would not see Jimmy for a long time, and that we could not go fishing together once in a while.

Later Ma said that Jim would be away for only a year.

And the old man *was* hard to live with. When he came home some nights and got drunk after supper, he would repeat the whole story of what happened to Jimmy. He said that everyone in town talked about the cops chasing a car going like hell over in the next town, and how just after they fired a couple of shots into the air, the car went off the road. "It went right through a cow fence and rolled over two times before stopping against a tree along the bank of the river. And who should the cops pull out of the car, boy?" he said to me one night. "You're own brother. That God damned fool disgracing the family." Then he ran his long fingers through his stringy hair.

"And I got to look at these people in town every day. God damned if I don't have to."

My old man would pound his heavy fist on the table when he was drunk, talking about the disrespect brought on the family by Jimmy. I did not feel any different than before, except that I wanted to see my brother. One day I asked the old man when he would come home. Ma had said that he would be home in a month. I became excited and somehow hoped that if I asked the old man he might come home sooner.

"Come home!" the old man said, "God damn it, boy, ain't he caused enough trouble yet? I hope the Christ he never comes home."

"But he only took a car and went fast when the cops chased him. Probably nothing would 'ave happened if the cop didn't shoot a couple of times."

The old man rested his elbows on the table and put his long bony hands on his forehead, moving his head from side to side and looking down at the tablecloth. He had half of a glass of beer left and a bottle almost full; it made brown shadows from the kitchen light and gave off bubbles each time he slammed his fist on the table when I could not understand what he was trying to say.

"But, damn it all, boy, you don't just take things that belong to someone else. You don't just do it, God damn it all, and when you do, you go to jail, damn it, if you get caught, damn it, and that's the way it ought to be."

"And my son! Jesus Christ, one right from the family, bringing disgrace to everyone here. Why, I never did nothing like that when I was a

kid. Christ's sakes, there ain't no need of it. He's just born a bad actor." And the old man slammed one fist on the table, and then the other, and then spread his hands out and finally slammed one fist down again before taking another drink of beer. "Damn it all," he mumbled.

"Ma said he would come home in another month, and that he'll be good when he comes home, and that we can go fishing down to the river sometimes."

"By Jesus, if he comes home, I'll teach him something. I'll pound it into his thick head about bringing disrespect to the family. Pound it, God damn it all, with this here fist." And he pounded the table three or four times, and it shook, and I thought that one day when he was drunk it would break.

Ma came in and took me into the room next to the kitchen and then went back into the kitchen. I could hear dad from the next room when he was drunk and ma talked to him for a while. She sounded as angry as the old man, even though she could not talk as loud.

"When he comes home, you're not going to lay a hand on him," she said, pushing a chair close to the table where it belonged.

"Well, he's a criminal, by Jesus. If you couldn't teach him anything when I was away working all day, then I'll teach him something when he comes home. I'll teach him what it means to disgrace the family," and he hit the table and pushed the chair away.

"Disgrace the family, hah, you damned old drunken fool. Why, you disgrace the family."

"Shut up," the old man growled.

"It'll be a wonder if all the kids don't turn out to be drunkards," ma kept talking.

"Lookit woman, ain't you got sewing to do in the other room there? Well, get the hell in there and do it. I disgrace the family? Why, you don't know what the hell you're talking about."

"I guess I do," ma interrupted.

"I go out and sweat my life away everyday so we can have enough to eat and live a decent and respectful life."

"So you can earn enough to drink your God damned brew like a fool every night here on the table, that's why you go out and work. So you can come home to supper and get me to wash your clothes, you damned liar."

"Well, if Jim's coming home in a month, I don't want him talking to this here boy. He's bad influence, bad influence, I tell you, and I won't have it."

"You're bad influence. He shouldn't be talking to a drunkard, either," ma answered.

"Well, I'll talk to my own kid any time I want to, and you're not going to interfere at all, God damned your soul."

I went upstairs and was happy that Jimmy was coming home so we could talk again and he could tell me about what happened someday when we went fishing down by the river. I thought about the fish I could catch and those that I had caught and looked at my rod. I read on the butt section where it said "To Joe from James, 1946". Then I looked at his rod and wiped away the dust, wondering if he would be anxious to go fishing.

Then two months later Jimmy came home, but we did not go fishing, and he did not tell me anything about the last year. He talked a lot about motorcycles and how fast they were and how much fun they were to ride. He worked in the gas station at night so that he and the old man hardly ever saw each other. Ma talked to Jimmy and the old man still, but never at the same time, and in the day Jimmy could talk to me as long as the old man was not home, and sometimes we talked about fishing in the river, but we never went again.

Then one day Jimmy gave me all his fishing rods and fly-tying equipment. We spent a lot of time together, and he showed me how to put hackle and peacock herle and fan wings on a Royal Coachman. And he showed me how to tie streamers and nymphs and wet flies and how to make deer-hair bass bugs. Finally this stopped one day after I had tied a McGinty with him watching.

"All you need is practice now. There's nothing more I can teach you."

"I'll keep the moths out of the feathers."

"Take care of all my equipment, and put it where it won't be in the way of the old man."

"You're not going fishing anymore?" I asked.

"Never here, maybe someday, but far away."

The next night Jimmy brought a motorcycle home when he came back from work. The old man was asleep and pretty drunk. He did not hear the engine, but I awoke and saw the dark shape and its lights, and heard the throbbing engine. When the engine was stopped, the whole world outside seemed dark and quiet and I heard Jimmy coming up the stairs to bed. I met him on the stairs and we talked quietly for a while.

"You bought a motorcycle?"

"Last week."

"What color is it?"

"Blue, with a lot of chrome. It's big."

"It must be fast."

"Awful fast," Jimmy said, "and fun to ride on a hilly road."

"At night?"

"It's most fun at night. No cars in your way."

"What will the old man say?"

"He'll be mad as hell."

"Can I go for a ride some day?" I asked, my heart jumping.

"Yea, but the old man can't find out."

"He won't. We can go when he's in work."

"He'd be mad as hell."

"Jesus, would he be mad," I answered, and we both went off to bed laughing a little.

Jimmy used to sleep on the other side of my room, but when he came home from jail the old man made him move into another room. He said that a boy shouldn't have to sleep in a room where a criminal sleeps unless he's in jail. We had plenty of rooms in the house, so it wasn't any trouble getting Jimmy another room, but before he went to jail we used to stay awake late sometimes, talking. I missed that now.

I was up when the old man went to work that day. He saw the cycle over by the barn just before he left. Because he got so drunk the night before, ma had a hard time getting him out of bed that morning, and he was in a hurry when he went out the kitchen door. But on the porch he stopped for awhile and looked over at the motorcycle next to the barn. His hand was over his eyes, shielding them from the morning sun, and he stood mumbling for awhile. I could hear what he said because one of the bedroom windows was right over the porch, and I was looking out to see what would happen when he saw the motorcycle.

"For Christ's sakes, what the hell is gonna happen here next? Motorcycles in the yard! This God damned house will set everyone in town to talking again, just about when they're quieting down. You people stay out here all day, but I gotta work in town and see them people. What the hell kind of a place will they think this is? First a thief, and now a motorcycle. He probably stole the damned thing to boot."

When the old man came home from work in the afternoon, he always looked tired. His shoulders would sag forward a little and his belly would hang out over his belt. He would walk from the garage to the house without lifting his feet too high from the driveway. This morning when he stood on the porch he stood as straight as he ever stood in the morning, and his belly didn't seem to hang over the belt too much. He walked with

quick steps off the porch. Before turning in the driveway to go to the garage, he stopped and looked at the motorcycle again. He seemed to stiffen. Then, nodding slowly to himself, he walked over to the car. I ran to the window and saw him get into the car shaking his head slowly from side to side. As he got closer to the car, he walked slower. When he got into the car, he slammed the door. I heard the engine start, and then he was gone, off to work.

I felt glad when I saw the car disappear, and before the engine noise had died out I was outside looking at the motorcycle with the heavy white handle bar grips and the smooth leather seat.

Jimmy worked on his motorcycle at home that day. I helped polish the chrome and clean the grease from the engine. Then I waxed the blue fenders and tank and put saddle soap on the leather seat and the saddle bags. While I made everything on the motorcycle shine, Jimmy took the carburetor apart. He laid out in neat order on newspaper all the parts and cleaned them with kerosene. Then he put it back together and took me for a ride all the way into the next town and back up along the river. With the air rushing by, flowing through my hair and around my ears, and making tears in my eyes, and dusty clouds behind on the dirt roads, I remember going over the hill where we got walnuts in the fall, the pine trees too, where people came to get cones for Christmas, and the greens on the ground for wreaths, past the water-filled quarry where we pulled the biggest bullheads I ever saw splashing from the water at night, over the bridge of the brook that was dammed up below in the hemlocks and where everyone went swimming, and where the town gangs came to fight and holler and shout a lot at each other now and then, and finally past the big river where Jimmy went through the fence with the car. As we went past the place with the patched up fence, Jimmy put the clutch in, turned the gas a little, and the engine raced and sounded angry, backfiring from each pipe in the quiet country. On the back of the motorcycle, I felt like a giant, going fast along the river in the sun and shade and cool air; like the ride would last forever, hoping it would, going fast and surely like the river, and knowing that the ride would be over in a little while; feeling both happy and sick and not knowing just what to feel and finally not caring and just trying to enjoy the ride. Then we came over the bridge by the pool where I fished and into the yard. I wished that I could have taken another ride then, but the old man must have been on his way home and we did not want to chance letting him see us together.

Jimmy left the house before the old man drove his junk home around five o'clock. When he got out of the car, he carried a big bag of clinking

beer bottles into the kitchen. Ma was worried, because she knew something was bothering the old man when he brought home that many bottles of beer and put them all into the refrigerator.

After Jimmy came home from jail, we never talked at supper time. The old man was always ready to start an argument about anything, so the only time we talked was when he asked questions. That night, it seemed quieter than ever at the table, like everyone was trying not to make any noise with the forks and knives and plates, except the old man, who just went about his meal the same as ever. Just before the supper was over he started talking to ma.

"I'm gonna settle with Jim tonight."

"About what?" ma asked.

"About what! Jumpin Jesus, woman, ain't you got eyes. Didn't you see the motorcycle by the barn?"

"Yes."

"And all you say is 'Yes'. God damn it. Either that son-of-a-bitchin machine goes out of here or Jim moves out into the barn. He ain't gonna be allowed in the house no more. No more, that's final."

After supper, when ma had finished the dishes, the old man sat at the table and drank beer all night, waiting for Jimmy. I saw the motorcycle come into the yard with the headlight bouncing up and down from the bumps in the driveway. Jimmy wasn't surprised to see the old man up and the kitchen lights on because I had told him about the old man on the porch mumbling that morning.

The old man staggered up from the chair with a beer bottle in one hand and he knocked a whole bunch more off the table with the other. They broke, one on top the other, on the floor while he was throwing a chair toward the radiator so that he could make it to the door all right. With all the noise downstairs in the kitchen, I thought something big was going to happen, but out on the porch the old man stood and shouted a few times, and then it was all over.

"Get the hell out of the house," he shouted. "You God damned disgracing thief of a bastard. Take your son-of-a-bitching cycle and get out."

"I am, tonight."

"Well go, damn it, go."

"I got to get some money upstairs."

"You ain't comin in this house no more."

"I'm coming in to get my money," Jimmy challenged.

"Why you smart alec of a motor cycle ridin' Son-of-a-bitch," and then

the old man stumbled off the porch, shouting and falling to the ground and then staggering back up.

"I'll break every bone in your damned body. I'll knock some sense into that God damned thick skull of a head of yours." And he came toward Jimmy with the empty beer bottle in one hand. Jimmy did not move. He had one hand behind his cycle, and I could see from upstairs that he had a piece of wood in it. When the old man got close he hit him with the piece of fire wood. The old man seemed to crumple like there was no more life in him. He did not fall down right away, and Jimmy was getting ready to hit him again just as he fell to the cinders in the driveway, and then he did not move anymore.

Looking at ma in the doorway of the kitchen, Jimmy said, "He asked for it, ma."

"You better go before he starts moving again. You need your money upstairs?"

"I got it in my pocket, ma. I got everything I need in the saddle bags. I came to say good-bye, that's all."

"And hit the old man," ma said.

"I enjoyed it. He deserved it."

Jimmy looked at the old man on the ground with the beer bottle off to one side and then at the stick in his own hand. He threw it over toward the wood shed.

"And say good bye to Joe for me. Keep him out of jail. He learned to tie good dry flies, so he can earn some extra money in the winter."

In the wind rushing by outside, Jimmy started his motorcycle. I felt the air vibrate and saw fire from both tail pipes. My heart throbbed with the rhythm of the engine until it could no longer keep up, and with a surge of power I saw the cycle go surely to the end of the driveway and then to the fork in the road. Going northward from the house over the little hill where we had the log cabin, I saw the dancing lights of the motorcycle for the last time. Then I looked in the driveway and saw the drunk man lying there, bloody on the side of his head. I could see this from the light that came from the kitchen. Then ma shut the light off, and there were no stars or moon or any light and it felt like rain, with the wind rushing around the house and through the tall elms outside.

Today there is only the world and my own motorcycle and the good earth with its clear springs and fresh streams. And one lonely letter from Jimmy. I got that a month after he left home. It's from Colorado.

It says:

Dear Joe

It's nice here in the mountains. I haven't fished yet in the stream out here, but the fish are big and there are a lot of them. I've seen other people fish and they catch a lot of trout.

When you leave home, burn my fishin' stuff. I don't want the old man to touch it.

Goodbye

Jimmy.

That was five years ago, and we do not live on the farm anymore. Since this morning I live everywhere. The whole land is my home. I will go with the wind from the North and the South and the East and the West. My face will feel the air from the mountains and valleys and rivers and lakes and oceans. When I am near water I will be near the pool in the brook that ran to the ocean and then to the whole world. This shall be my home, this brook that made the beer cold on the last day in this town where the old house is falling down. In a couple of years it will be gone, the yard will be barren, the house no more than a lonely cellar hole. But the wind will still blow in the elms and wail over a redstone cellar hole. And the rain of spring will come, and summer and winter and fall, too, only I shall not be here to feel them.

I have said goodbye to the old man. He is drunk all the time now and ma is going to live with my sister when she gets married next year. He was drunk when I told him goodbye and was not even angry. He just looked up over a beer bottle and said:

"Drive careful, boy. And work hard. Don't never come back."

I won't. I'm sure of that. I must find Jimmy. The old man always said the place to find him would be jail somewhere. Maybe he is in jail. First I will look where there are mountains, and streams, and ask about motorcycles, too. He liked these things. But after that I really won't know where to look, and if I do not find him at first, I may never find him.

TRIUMVIRATE

Douglas Flaherty

Out of the purple undulation
of the midnight sky
rode three saintly gaunt men
on wild mustangs.
"Hope for all!"
uttered the forward rider
with the yellow tunic
and prodigious smile.
"Sympathize!"
issued from the latter horseman
with black stringent assurance.
"Peace be to us!"
peeled from the carmine lips
of the middle rider
as he gleefully stroked
the mustang's mane.
And into the morning's
vermillion sun
traveled the holy band
where they were saluted
and gingerly burnt to ash.

SUMMER DEATH

Douglas Flaherty

Flesh to flesh you tortured me unbeware,
A purple hollyhock tottering free;
Your cool thighs furrowed to the touch,
Giving nothing, stripping anxiety bare.
The stalk sprang limp before the harrow,
The scent gushed lurid to the balk;
For wild tasting nips the body numb
And turns the crisp flow to fallow.
Nothing breeds nothing but the sound
Of wild hummingbird wings of prey.
Announcing the conception of death,
Beaked-bird drops seed upon barren ground.

WHAT PATH LOVE?

Douglas Flaherty

The pink jowled maiden
played on her dulcimers
a spastic cadenza.
And with dark, tremulous voice
projected her aria:
"And will he not come again?
And will he not come again?"
she reiterated as Ophelia had,
primped, blue-sky high
on a golden willow bough.
"No, no he is dead;
Go to thy death bed;
He will never come again,"
she trilled —
a prelude to the fall.
And rising from the resonance of her aria
the pink jowled maiden
fell from her stool,
breaking her white tragic left leg
below the fibula.

LOVE LITTERED

Douglas Flaherty

Claw-paw
on window paring
subdues gossamer
film of fright,
to lay and ponder
while purple dusk
wild taunts love;
powder keg
tempest-tossed.
Meow breaking
feathery stillness
to tremor with sense
of vibrant tone
ushering glad
parting shade of silk.
Rustling black hues
night clutch
love-littered street:
cat-calls wild
(love lull thickens)
as midnight cat
on seminal feet
comes stalking,
love-glare staring.

A PERSPECTIVE

Douglas Flaherty

Did you ever view
A shunky on the hill?
So neat, so squat,
And wonderful how many
Green buzzing flies it got.
I thought about it once,
And just sat there,
And thought about it.

HAIKU: POEMS OF THE NIGHT

Douglas Flaherty

On star-flung evenings
Trampled geraniums cry —
Children in the dark.

Under moon-bright sky
Cat tip-toes on midnight fence . . .
A black shadow falls.

Dry, cold northern wind . . .
Snow-bird sings on frozen bough —
Death of love that night!

Red-clad boat glides straight
Yellow moon circles above —
What path does love take?

Howling voice of night,
The gods of wrath are evoked —
Finger in the jamb.

DINOSAUR

by Sam Gorvine

"Tell me more about the sleepwalking," said the man with the short white hair and the chubby pipe.

A thin faced young man in a shabby suit was seated in a leather chair alongside the desk. The office was simply furnished, with vanilla colored walls from which the paint was just beginning to peel. In front of the older man was a desk with the usual green blotter, two ash traps, a four inch length of fossilized bone serving as a paperweight, and under it some wrinkled papers with the letterhead "Andrew J. Beschner Psychiatric Clinic."

"My sister told me about it," the young man continued. "She said I used to come wandering through the house while she and my parents were watching television. They thought it was very funny at the time."

"How often did this happen?"

"Not too often from what my sister said; maybe once a month or something — I don't know, I don't remember."

"About how old were you when you used to do this?"

"I don't know, about nine or ten maybe."

"Do you remember anything at all yourself?"

"Well, I remember once waking up from something . . . I was dreaming . . . I remember parts of the dream, and I remember the strange way I woke up. I remembered it before this but I never connected it with sleepwalking or anything."

"The strange way you woke up? What do you mean?"

"Well I was standing up, see, in my sleep."

"What was the dream about?"

"Something about school . . . I don't remember much of it," he said apologetically, "but what I do remember is kind of clear." He tried to laugh. "Funny how you remember little things from so long ago. My first memory is lying in my crib looking out between the bars at my parents. I remember where all the furniture was and everything."

"What were your parents doing?"

"Fighting, I guess."

"Fighting?"

"Well, not hitting each other or anything; just yelling."

"How did you feel then?"

"I don't remember, I guess it's just too long ago."

There was a long pause during which the older man finished filling his pipe and began to pack the tobacco.

"What are you thinking?" he asked the young man who was looking furtively at him.

"Nothing."

The pipe was lit now. The room had been quiet for nearly a minute now, and it began to look like another of those nowhere sessions.

"Where were we?" asked the young man.

"You were about to tell me about the dream, the time you awoke standing up."

"Oh. Well, the dream was about school. I had done something wrong . . . something terrible, and the teacher came over to me, dragged me

out of my chair and began to bang my head against the iron legs of the desk . . . and all the other kids were laughing."

"What had you done?"

"I don't remember. Something awful."

"Where were you standing when you woke up?"

"In front of my mother's bed."

"Was she in it?"

"No, she was with my father and sister watching television."

"You said a couple of weeks ago that as a small boy you used to run to your mother's bed when you had nightmares or were otherwise frightened. I'd like to hear more about this."

"Well, I don't remember very much, but there was one time . . ." He paused and began to fidget. "I was afraid to go to sleep because of some stupid story I read in a comic book." He looked down at the floor in front of him.

"What was the story about?"

"Something about a ventriloquist who had a hand that was a head."

"I don't understand. You mean he had two heads?"

"Yes. One on his shoulders and one at the end of his right arm." He laughed half-heartedly. "It was a stupid story." The young man's face twisted strangely about the mouth as though he wished to cry. But instead he laughed.

"What's so funny?" the older man asked.

"Nothing," said the other.

"Do you want to cry?"

"Yes. But I can't. The muscles don't work that way. It always comes out a laugh . . . or something. You should have heard me during "Gone *With the Wind*. I was a riot." He laughed again.

"Tell me more about the story."

"Oh, yes. Well, the guy had a ventriloquist act, see? He'd built a dummy around the other head, but he couldn't control the other head. At night when he was asleep it used to take control of him and kill girls."

"In what way?"

"By biting them to death."

"So you couldn't sleep and went to your mother's bed; you were how old . . . nine?"

"Yes."

"Well go on; what happened after you got into your mother's bed?"

"I couldn't sleep there either, because the room was different somehow. I felt . . . afraid."

"Of what?"

"I don't know. But the room began to change. The door seemed to get farther and farther away and the air got heavy and the clock's ticking began to slow down and get louder and louder and louder . . ." He paused almost out of breath.

"Whom were you afraid of?"

The room was very quiet.

"My mother," he said evenly. There was a short pause. "I was afraid to touch her because I might wake her up and she'd tell me to go to my own bed and . . . and I was afraid to go to sleep because . . ." There was another long silence. "I don't remember," he sighed finally. "Do you remember last week I was telling you about how I turned my bed around so that when I set up I wouldn't see myself in the mirror at night?"

"Yes."

"Well, last Monday I was lying in bed thinking about that, and I realized that I was still afraid to see myself in the mirror in the dark."

"What did you think you'd see?"

"I'm not sure. Something gruesome, like the picture of Dorian Grey or something."

"Dorian Grey?"

"You know, the story about that guy who has the picture of himself painted and as the picture ages, it takes on all the bad things he does. Well, anyway, I decided that maybe it was important that I take a look in the mirror with the lights off, seeing as I'm twenty-two and shouldn't be afraid of the dark. Well, anyway, I stood in front of the bureau with the mirror. There was a desk lamp on the bureau and it was on. It was about eleven-thirty at night. Well, I looked at myself and it was like it was somebody else was there behind the mirror. I mean I had never really looked at myself . . . that sounds stupid, I know, but when I'd comb my hair I'd look at my hair, y'know? And when I was washing my face, at different parts, but never at ME . . . at the whole thing. It's kinda hard to explain. But anyway I put my hand on the light switch and turned it off. I turned it right on again because my eyes weren't used to the dark and it was so dark I got scared. Well, I stood there for a few minutes with the light on getting up courage, and then I turned my head away from the mirror and turned off the light. Well I musta stood there for a good five minutes, but I just couldn't turn my head and look into that mirror. It was like a deep black pit that I could see from the corner of my eye and there was something horrible in it. So I finally turned on the light again.

It was really ridiculous, at my age! So I finally decided I'm gonna do

it. I stood there and then I just put out the light. Just like that." He stopped for a few seconds as though weighing his next words. When they came, his voice was slow and quiet.

"When the light went out I felt like running. I felt as though I were falling into a hole because my eyes weren't used to the dark again and I couldn't see anything. Just very vague shadows. I was hanging on to the bureau with all my might to keep from running or screaming. And then gradually I saw the outline of the window reflected and then my own silhouette and then two deep holes where my eyes should have been . . . but all the rest was shadow . . . and then I leaned suddenly across the bureau toward the shadow, and the shadow leaned too, and . . ." There was a long pause; the young man's face was working convulsively.

"What did you see?" asked the other.

There was another long pause.

"It was only me," he said, and began to cry. He turned his face away so that the older man would not see, and nothing was said until he had finished.

"That wasn't so bad, was it?"

"No," said the other blowing his nose, "I guess not."

"Well, our time is almost up. From this and things we have discussed before it seems that if we are to be successful here, you must not evade the responsibility for your own feelings. It is easy to do, but after all there is only you." The young man looked at him intently for a moment and then nodded.

"See you next week," smiled the older one, standing up.

"Okay," said the young man, and getting to his feet, walked out the door, stopping in the corridor to put on his overcoat.

The older man watched the overcoat until it reached the end of the corridor where the waiting room was with its rows of wooden benches. The coat turned the corner and disappeared.

He was very tired. A couple of minutes to four; just time for a cup of coffee before the last patient. He turned back to the desk and took a jar of instant coffee, a cup and an immersion iron from the big bottom drawer. Then he went next door to the row of sinks in the washroom and filled the cup.

Putting it on the desk he plugged in the immersion iron and set it in the water. He went to the half-open door and looked down the corridor at the few benches he could see in the waiting room. They were full.

As the water began to boil, he took out the iron, unplugged it, added coffee and a lump of sugar and began to stir the coffee absently.

THE BRIDGE

John Steede

Strung beyond the ramrod rails of bridge
and bone, he crouched, cold against a cement
cage of well-wishers and social workers,
saintly staring down the bruised night sky.

He was on their stage, and their acclaim
of laugh and wit and silence roared down
his mind like a train in the memory
of a broken child. This is how he went,

left them all applauding and like a wren
in a lost downwind, waved his pathetic
arms in hope; then hit, shattered the dream,
awakening to the reality of never.

"Touch of Winter" *Photography by* CRASCO

"Landscape" *Print by* PAUL SERRA

"Dead Bird"

Print by WM. SHUMWAY

"Figure"

Drawing by REINBERG

"Still Life with Milkweed"

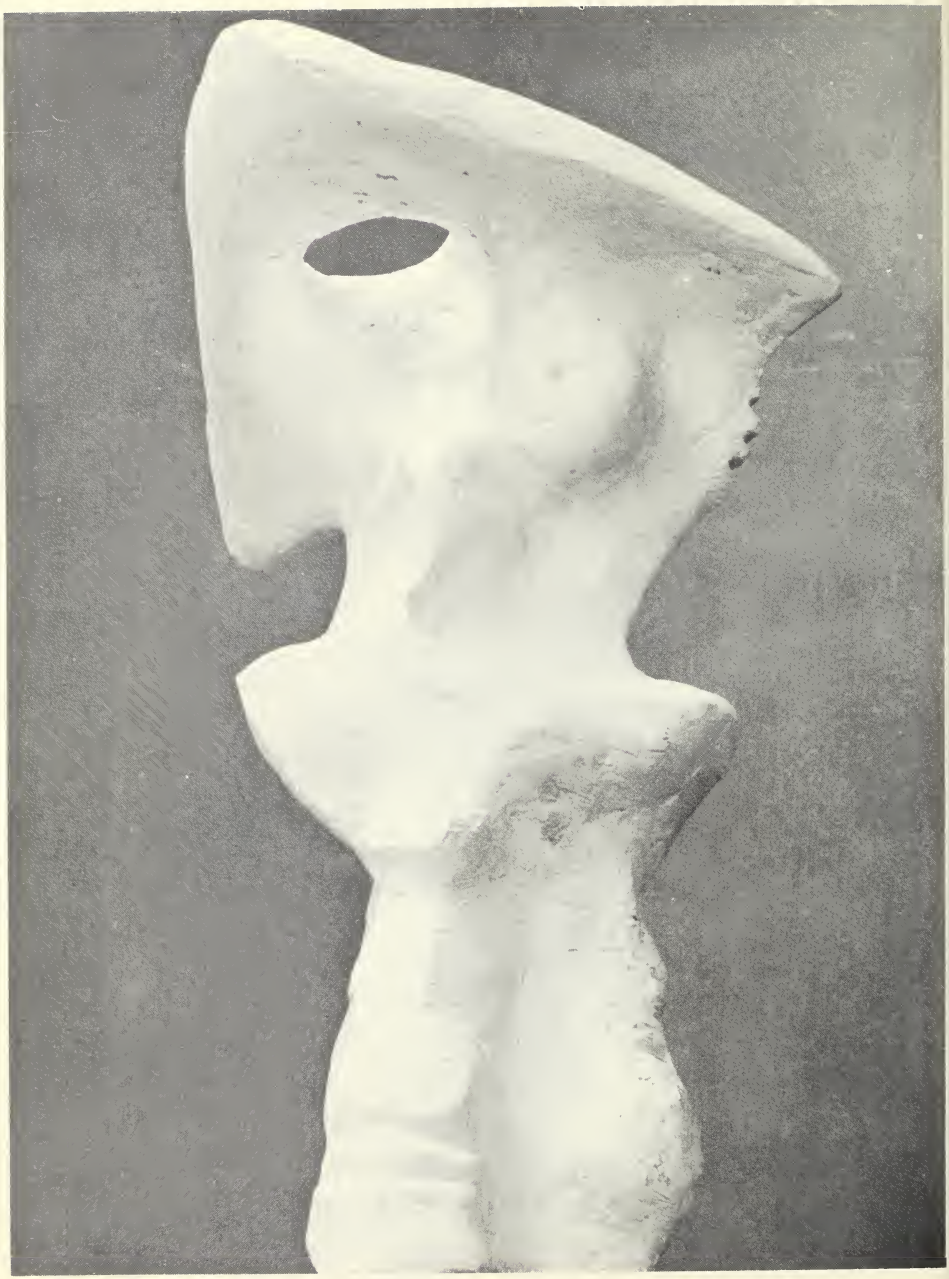
Drawing by BERBERIAN

"Head Fragment"

Sculpture by KATZ

"Driftwood"

Drawing by JONES



Coverpiece: "Figure" *Sculpture by* DAVID TROUFANT

The Amazing Wife of Edwin Yeti

A Short Story by Paul E. Theroux

"They said he had it ever since he was born or ever since the whuddayacallit was fertilized, although we only just found out when he was five. It was too late, then, anyway for him," said Mrs. Edwin Yeti, brushing absently at the shine on her skirt. She recrossed her legs a third time.

The man sitting across the plastic covered table shifted in the chair and turned a page in his notebook. He wrote and looked up. "How do you spell it," he said.

"I don't know . . . *progenia*. Stuff like that is hard to spell." The woman got up and went to a stack of newspapers near a telephone. She mumbled, ". . . thought I wrote it here someplace . . . when the doctor . . . oh, *here it is!*" She tore off a corner of one of the newspapers and waved it in the air at the seated man. "I *knew* it was here someplace," she exclaimed, smiling triumphantly at the ragged bit of newsprint.

The woman then seated herself across from the man once again and placed the paper very carefully on the table. She put her head close to it and grimaced at it for a while, as if it were an ant she was trying to locate in a sugar bowl. "I'm trying to read my writing," she muttered without looking up at the man.

"Here, let me look," the man said, reaching for the scrap of paper.

The woman snatched it off the table and held it back, away from the man. "Wait a minute, will you! I think I can read *my own handwriting* a little bit better than you!" She stared the man down.

The man apologized and nodded in her direction. She fingered the paper with reverence now, as if it were at least five cents worth of Green Stamps.

"Okay," the woman said, assuredly, "there's a *p* and an *r* and I guess the next one is an *o* . . . wait, maybe it's an *o*—no. No it is not. It's an *o*. I'm sure. Then a . . . *g* and an . . . I can't tell whether that one is an *i* or an *o*."

The man stopped writing the letters in the notebook. He looked at the woman who was closing one eye and then the other.

"It is an *e*," she announced. The next is an *r* — I always make my *r's*

with a hole at the top," she said fishing for a food particle in one of her back teeth with her tongue. And an *i* and an *a*. I guess." She swallowed and straightened her back.

"That would be," the man hesitated, "p-r-o-g-e-r-i-a. *Progeria.*"

"I guess so. Yes. Progeria," the woman said with finality. "We found out when he was five years old. It was awful."

The woman adjusted herself to the flatness of the chair and focused slowly on the man, like a rangefinder. Then, her lips pursed in remorse and she stared at the bridge of the man's nose. The man stopped writing, leaned on the table toward her, and patted the slim bones on the top of her other-wise fat hands. She was not sure exactly what she should do, so she merely unclenched her fist and let it fall limp against the plastic of the table.

She had started drumming on the table with her fingers when the man spoke again. "It *must* have been awful," he muttered with over-practiced torture.

"Oh, it *was*—I want to tell you," the woman said. "I mean, you know how old men are—real *old* men? If you've ever lived under the same roof with an old man, then I won't have to tell you what a trial Arthur was . . . sometimes. Not that we minded him bothering and whining about everything. I mean, *Arthur had an incurable disease.*" The woman's forehead wrinkled. She is raising her eyebrows, the man thought to himself, although they've all been plucked out. The woman finished with, "I want to tell you."

"Yes," the man said, scratching his palm, "incurable."

"Well, we didn't *mind* all the trouble and stuff. But he *did* seem to have," the woman was speaking in her throat now, "he *did* seem to have more than the usual . . . ah . . . you know."

"The usual . . ."

"The usual . . . *complaints,* I guess you'd call them. Like 'Queen for a Day is too loud' or he'd lisp on purpose because he knew I hated lisping. Or he'd fight us — we were careful never to hurt him — we knew he was sick. Sometimes he'd talk about bowel movements all day and never do anything. Well, it was always something, I'm telling you. But poor little Arthur went ahead and died just the same. *Horrible* business."

"Bowel movements . . . all day," the man pronounced, writing swiftly in his notebook.

"Oh, we couldn't blame *him*," the woman keened, throwing her head to the side and fixing her eyes on a paster-of-paris Christ which had been

made into a bank and which stood, bleeding and merciful on the refrigerator along with a dish of softening margerine.

"Wasn't his fault," the man said with some conviction.

"Certainly *not,*" the woman said, her voice rising and falling as if in song. "The doctor told me that anyone, *anyone* can get it, really. Everybody, for God's sake. If you can imagine that. Mostly kids get it though."

"I see," the man said.

"Now, don't get the idea that I gave it to him. You don't think that *I* gave it to him, do you? Well, *do you?"*

"No," the man said quickly. Then, he thought a moment and repeated, "No, I do not."

"Someone accused *me* of giving it to him. Why . . . why it's *silly,* that's what it is. It's downright silly to think that I could give him a thing like that. I told you it was *incurable.* I couldn't give him something *incurable,* could I? *Could I?"*

"I don't think it's possible."

"Neither do I. I mean, it wasn't like I took an airplane ride when I was pregnant or even rode the bus much, let alone getting drunk and falling downstairs like *some neighbors I know."* The woman said the last phrase too loud, as if someone were at her window outside, listening at the fire-escape. "I've never been in a plane, to tell you the honest truth," she continued sullenly, "and I prolly never will at this rate. When I was carrying Arthur I cut down to a pack a day, of cigarettes. No real drinking, except for a short beer now and then. I don't hardly drink, anyways, so it doesn't matter, I suppose."

The man poised himself for a question, but the woman murmured on, barely moving her lips and still talking hoarsely down in her throat. "Everyone said I was the *picture of health.* The picture of health. It was a good pregnancy—everyone said so. My sister-in-law came in on Fridays to get the house picked up. I quit my job picking apricots—picking apricots isn't too good for your bowels anyway." She looked closely at the man.

"When you *eat* the apricots. You know?" She said after a pause.

The man jerked his head.

"So the doctor was really happy with my progress. I was feeling fine and I didn't have any whuddayacallits . . . ah . . . discharges, at all. Like I say, everyone said I was the picture of . . ."

"If I may interrupt just a moment," the man said, clicking the top of his retractable pen faster than the woman had ever thought possible. "May I ask the name of your doctor and his place of business?"

The woman told him the Polish name, and then tried to spell it. She

told him the office was somewhere in Los Angeles, she wasn't sure where, but it was stucco and pretty ritzy. Big, she reminded the man, after all the doctor wasn't a crock like some of them. The man told her he would check on it.

Both were silent for a while. The woman looked around the room rather furtively, as if looking for her lost momentum. The man began to speak, but when he was interrupted by the woman, and when they were both speaking at once he saw that she had no intention of stopping. He blew his nose in subtle protest and let the woman continue.

"And after a year," she was saying, "he showed signs of being a pretty good looking kid. No Ronald Fairbanks or anything like that, you understand, but . . . not a *bad looking kid*. Had his old man's eyes and nose. My mouth. That's all he had of ours, though."

"Do you have any early pictures of Arthur," the man said, looking around the room for one, but seeing only the plaster Christ bank and the margerine.

"No. Unless you count pictures he sneaked into. Arthur used to run up and stick his head in pictures at the last minute. Drove everyone crazy. He did it at Beefy Czap's First Holy Communion. They moved, anyway, the Czaps did. They took his picture at school, I guess, for the records."

"Arthur went to school?" The man's pupils dilated with wonder.

"Sure he did. Got good grades, too. We promised him a present if he brought home a good report card. So when he got all A's we bought him a turtle in a plastic bowl. He really liked that little green thing. We couldn't have bought him a better prize — only two bits for the turtle, fifty for the bowl. It was plastic and had a special ramp for the turtle to walk on."

"He really liked the turtle, eh?"

"Liked the turtle! He loved the thing. He stared at it and talked to it all day Saturday when the other kids went to the show. And instead of watching television he watched *it.* Arthur and that little turtle were the best of friends . . . I could *hear* them talking from the kitchen. It was great while it lasted — you can't imagine what it did for Arthur." She paused. "But, easy come, easy go."

The man looked up sharply, then said, "yes" a little uncertainly.

"Well, you know how it is. Nothing really lasts long, does it?"

"I'll say not."

"We just came in one morning and there he was."

"It *was* unfortunate. I remember reading about it in . . ."

"We all were sad. Alfy — he's the oldest boy — screamed and yelled

and threw himself on the floor and then even tore his shirt off. Course, we wouldn't have done it all if it wasn't for Arthur. We figured we owed it to the poor little kid."

"He was your son."

"You'll never know the heartbreak of it all."

The man was mumbling, ". . . heartbreak of it all" and writing in the notebook as the woman continued.

"But that wasn't all of it. Not by a long shot. We got a regular little casket for him and even little tiny flowers and like that. What I mean is everything was the same except it was smaller — as small as we could get, really." The man looked up, and when his eyes met those of the woman he looked down again. "What I mean to say is we gave the little guy a regular little funeral with candles and all. Some of the neighbors came."

"Well, they must have all known Arthur."

"I'll say they all knew Arthur," the woman said, pausing a moment to emphasize the dramatic shock of her answer, and to let the words echo a little in her head. "Why, I'm telling you, when it came to cookies and milk and fudgies he . . . he *cleaned up*. They all adored him. I mean," she nodded, *"adored* him."

"So, naturally they all came to the funeral."

"Sure. Why not. They figured it'd only be an hour or so. It was for Arthur, they figured."

"Of course. And for you too, I imagine."

"Oh. They prolly figured it'd help us out of a spot, too."

"A spot?"

"Well, I'm not saying that Arthur was *unpopular* — I told you about the milk and fudgies — but after all, there was only just this street. That's not many people when you think about it. So, there wasn't that many for a real funeral unless almost everybody came."

"No, I don't imagine there would be."

"No," the woman said, flapping her hand in a vague gesture.

"Must have been terrible."

"Horrible."

"Awful."

"I'm telling you."

"Yes . . . but, can you give me a few more . . . *de*tails . . . of the funeral?"

"I told you about the casket and the little flower things. Did I tell you about the candles. *They* were *dar*ling — the kind you put on a birthday cake."

"Birthday candles?"

"Those are the only one's we figured would be small enough."

"Yes. They *are* small." He paused, then said in a small voice, "was there anything else?"

"No, other than that it was just about like every other turtle funeral. Every other *two-bit* turtle funeral. They prolly have big ones in zoos where they have those big Walt Disney turtles that lay the eggs. You didn't see that movie by any chance?"

"Turtle funeral?" The man said, furrowing his forehead into thousands of little frowns. "Did you say, *turtle funeral?"*

"Well . . . *yes,*" the woman said with a second chin of surety appearing beneath her indignantly cocked head. "I toldja the turtle only *cost a quarter.* And fifty for the bowl. I wasn't lying."

"No," the man said, clicking his pen.

The woman was silent. She had lost her momentum once again. But instead of allowing herself to be interrupted she began mumbling incoherently to herself. From where the man was sitting she could have been singing, he thought, and trying to remember words to a song she had heard just enough times to recall fragments of melody and words. Clearly, she was having difficulty, but this did not stop her, and soon the man caught phrases which he could understand. It wasn't long before she was speaking audibly at a good rate.

". . . or maybe it was the wrong kind of water or food, or maybe it was the air . . . lousy . . . too hot or too cold. Or the bowl . . . *it* might have been wrong, although it had a ramp and was real plastic and cost fifty cents. I don't know. Maybe he picked him up too much, you know, *handled* him . . . or maybe not enough . . ." Her voice trailed off as if her mind were narrowing and losing focus the way her eyes did. She said, "I don't know" again.

"I'll bet Arthur was real attached to that little turtle."

". . . anyway, he got soft. His shell. Although it wasn't colored like most two-bit turtles . . . and he died."

"I'll bet Arthur was really . . ."

"We wanted to buy him another one. It's only a quarter turtle, I said to him. But he only wanted that old soft turtle with the green shell. Green shells are hard to get — mostly they have colors or flowers on them. And Arthur's turtle was squishly and smelled and I couldn't look at it — it got pieces of lint on it from being carried around in his pocket. Pretty soon it wasn't a turtle at all but a ball — a soft ball of dead." The woman's voice droned as if she were speaking through a network of rubber bands.

"So I guess I'll check the school for pictures," the man said.

"I used to hear him cry sometimes at night, Arthur."

There was silence in the room for a long time. Even the woman's last word, the name, was gone. The sun going down illuminated the tops of things; the broken lamp on the table; the head of the woman — her hair in wild, gorgon strands stuck out, made gold by the late afternoon sun. The plaster Christ pocked under the beams and the margarine was lost in the shadow of the bank.

"Then he got old," she added, "from the disease."

"Incurable," the man said.

"And after his hair turned white he started to go bald. He got tired by just walking to the neighbor's houses for milk and . . . things. After a while he took the knobs off the TV so Alfy couldn't turn it on and make noise."

The man wrote in his notebook.

". . . and he stopped talking even after I told him I loved him and would do anything in the world for him. Anything at all — if he'd just name it. I was pregnant and he used to watch me and not say anything. Used to just watch me and wait."

"Used to wait. I see," the man said, writing.

"He waited in the corner there and just let all his hair fall out and his teeth, too . . ."

"Fell out," the man said.

". . . skin got white and wrinkley, like paper towels and I was sick every morning and sleeping in the afternoon, although my sister-in-law came in again to help me. But it *wasn't the same* — even though I let him use the playpen we bought for the new baby. He was small, Arthur, and I figured if he wanted to play he might as well use it for a while — he seemed to be shrinking, getting smaller and smaller — I *told him* I loved him. Believe me, I told him all the time. *All the time.*"

"Yes," the man said.

"He used to watch me from the playpen — from between the bars. I remember doing things in the kitchen and having to look at him all the time. Finally, I had to move him out of the kitchen into the hall because I couldn't do anything while he was looking at me. And sometimes I'd look up — into the hall — and *there he'd be.* He'd be *looking at me from the hall!* I could see his skin all wrinkley like grass and his hair just in little patches and clumps on his head with white spots — round — on his neck. His hands were all shrunk and shrivelled like . . . like *mine,* like that." She held her hands before her almost in disgust. "His hands were on arms — thin like sticks with lips, blue, and almost no face because it was hollow and could look through the bars easy at me. It got easier and

easier for him to look through the bars, but there wasn't any place I could move him. I just had to look. And he sort of hunched over and peeked his head through the bars while he held onto the side."

The man stopped looking at the woman when she stopped talking. He moved in his chair and she resumed.

"His ears didn't get small, but they got hard like shells and he couldn't see how he looked. That was the worst part. He just looked out from the bars like he wanted me to tell him that I made him like that, which wasn't true because *I told you I loved him* and I did. I couldn't come right out and say, *I didn't do it to you, Arthur* because he never said anything — he just looked at me with his old body and his little hands with long fingernails around the bars of the playpen."

"That disease," the man said. "Horrible."

"It was him. And it got so . . . I couldn't even . . ." The women gasped once. Then, she said, "look." She sobbed dryly still gasping, then, she shut her mouth tight and looked at the sun for a long while leaving the man forgotten at the other end of the table.

The man stared at the woman in awe, almost in reverence. He stopped twirling the pencil and sat very still. He had fixed himself on the chair tightly, his arms perched on the edge of the table motionless as if in a picture of an undefined period during an electrocution.

"My feet swelled up," the wife of Edwin Yeti said at last. "And so did my legs. Pretty soon I knew it was going to come any day." She paused. "The night I had the baby . . ." She stopped, then, picked up again. "The night I had the baby Arthur didn't sleep in the playpen like usual. He went for a walk — even though we told him never go out of the house. He walked all the way outside of town where the big trees are . . . the ones on the postcards."

The man could not think of the name of the big trees.

"And that's where they found him next morning. All curled up and nice at the foot of the big trees. They took a picture of him lying there with a blanket over him, but I tore it up so they couldn't put it in the paper. And I was in the hospital with the baby three more days and on the fourth *it* died from something. I was still getting sick every morning. But pretty soon I stopped. Like before."

Then in a quick explosion the woman screamed loud and prolonged and reedy in strange quavering octaves — beginning as a whimper and building to a shrill climax which persisted for a long time. The man did not move. His face barely changed as the face of the woman not far from his became a whistling pipe, the lips and features carved and distorted, the mouth agape like a seldom used pipe on an outraged calliope.

THE INSECT WORLD

Robert F. Lucas

A sanguine road
From red to blue,
Including the green.
The dusty pavement,
Grave for bleached bones,
Network for caterpillars
And crawling earthworms.

A hard, hard blacktop.
Tar, melting and
Sticking to all that pass on by,
But those that stay on the road
Learn to know it as home.

That civilized route
Of uncivil means.
The battlefield of
Many a tired soldiering ant.
The end of the trail
To the insect world.

"AMID A MILLION STRANDS OF GRASS"

M. G. Matasso

Amid a million strands of grass
I stand
Alone.
Where myriad stars dot night
I see
But dark.
Cloaked in eerie stillness
Crickets echo
Mournful prayers,
And in my lonely vigil
Black magic
Brews
Two moons
To shine.

SHADOW IN THE MIRROR

by Maurice Cocchi

I used to go early to the gym to sit and think and watch the quietness of the place. One hour before the fighters started to train, the quietness was absolute, and then the training started and it would seem that all the quiet hours were being avenged and that the sounds of the boxers' efforts would echo forever. The gym was in the lower part of the city and was a fifteen minute walk down from the library. Each night I would read in the library and then just before six o'clock leave and walk down the hill to the gym. It was an easy walk downhill, but I did not like it, and the grayness of the city just before dark made me walk fast to get to the gym where I could wander about the next few hours and in the winter get warm.

A half hour later the other fighters came to train. For three hours a day the gym would be filled with these angry men. Then the noise would cease and the lurching shadows disappear and loneliness would take hold of everything until the next day, when the fighters returned to drive the loneliness away. The heavy bags would swing for a-while, groaning to the agony of existence, and when they stopped there was left only the inert shadows of a million frustrated hopes and the empty stares of the faces on the fight placards that were nailed to the wall. Everyone was happy to leave the gym, and after training it felt good to be outside and free where the air moved a little more, and where you got thirsty as hell from having sweated so much during training.

When I came home from the gym at night, it would be dark and the house was usually quiet. Sometimes the old man and ma were watching television. Other times only ma was watching television and the old man was in the kitchen with his newspaper and coffee or wine. He drank wine when he did not have to go to work the next day, and coffee when he did. Sometimes he had sausage and cheese, too, with a big loaf of bread. I always came past him when I came in with my gym bag in one hand. He would look up and not say anything. Then I would get ready to have supper.

My supper was always in the oven. I ate it cold when it was not already warm. Sometimes when I did not eat right away the old man would tell me about the supper in the oven.

"Your supper is in the oven," he would say.

"O. K.," I would answer, and that was all we said. He would move

his paper to one side so that I had room to eat and we would not talk anymore about anything. I always ate the vegetables and the meat, drinking a lot of milk, and left everything else. Ma and the old man could not understand this. They did not know about boxing and I could not tell them how it was. They talked to others about it, but they always started out by saying that they could not understand. A long time ago they had heard me listening to the fights on the radio. An Italian had fought and won the title. They were happy. Then they saw me shadow boxing one day. They laughed then, along with everyone else in the house. Now that I trained a lot down town in the gym and came home with a welt on my face once in a while, and blood on my towels from my nose, they did not laugh any more. Other people laughed when they told them that I got a lot of bloody noses, but they did not laugh and we never talked too much about how it really was. We could have talked and they would have been swearing in Italian and not understanding. I could not understand Italian, but the swear words I knew, and the way they talked I could tell they could not understand. It was better not to talk, except about other things.

At the gym, when the wind blew hard in the winter you could hear it whistle down the alley outside and through an opening in the wall that was covered with pressboard. It was an endless battle to keep the hole blocked up and the cold drafts out, and each day the first man in would nail back the cardboard to keep it warm for the next few hours. When I came late I would hear the strange noises of the gym rushing out into the street to meet me. They seemed to follow the weak light out the door and into the shadows of the city night, and it was good to hear them outside because everything else seemed without life and you knew that at least there was something happening inside. After a week, these sounds became the music of the trade. These were the rhythms of the battle, the mysterious sounds of bitter men getting ready to conquer the world.

There was always the sound of the speed bag pounding back and forth and setting the rhythm for all the other noise: a continuous pattern of beats, a pause, and then a moment of violence as the fighter caught the rhythm again. Each fighter had his own rhythm, and I could always tell from the street who was working on the speed bag. The order in which the fighters punched the bag was a measure of their importance. It was preferable to shadow box first and then to punch the heavy bag if you did not spar. If you sparred, you would punch the heavy bag after sparring and then go on to punch the speed bag, skip rope, do sit ups to make the gut muscles hard and then end training with shadow boxing again. Because there was not enough equipment to go around, the important fighters always got to use the equipment in the right order, and the other fighters

filled in when the equipment was not being used. It was always a delicate moment when a new fighter became important and was given the preference of the equipment. This usually occurred after the fighter won a fight in some outstanding manner and the managers thought that they could earn some money with him.

While the speed bag drained the fury of one boxer, someone else would punch the heavy bag with the irregular patterns of clenched fists burying themselves into the leather. The hard punchers always threw single punches that rang out like pistol shots. The shots would overwhelm all the other noise of the gym for a second and then just as quickly fall away to yield to the swishing of the ropes and the furious pace of the speed bag. On the heavy bag the right hand noise was a little sharper than the left hook noise, but it depended a lot on the fighter, and most fighters threw more right hands than left hooks. I always threw more left hooks than other punches because I was left handed, but at the beginning none of my punches sounded like shots.

It was easy to be frightened by the boxers when they shadow boxed. They rushed about the gym like demons, throwing punches, grunting, snorting great quantities of air through their noses with each punch, and making faces in the mirror. One fighter would slide up to the front of the mirror, go through a series of exertions and slide away to a corner to practice the moves while another fighter moved up in front of the mirror. There was a certain comedy in watching the new fighters shadow box for the first time. Unleashing their anger against their own image, they would always press until the punches were stopping just inches away from the mirror. At this time you could close your eyes and swear that the next punch would not stop until it had bashed the mirror to pieces, but then someone would yell and they would back away. I wondered a long time how many mirrors in all the gloomy gyms across the land had been bashed to pieces by angry young fighters.

These sweaty confines came to be my home for three hours a day. I came to snort and grunt and throw angry bursts of punches at the mirror without smiling. Winter and spring and summer passed, and slowly I ground away at the techniques of the fight. And when September came, I got ready for my first fight.

It was to be a professional fight, and I worried a lot about everything that could happen. In the one week before the fight, I fought imaginary battles a thousand times. In church, in school, on the streets, everywhere I went, I would relapse into involuntary movements of the arms, fists clenched, and after making the move of a punch I would glance around and see if anyone was staring at me with strange eyes. Deep in the night

I would undergo the agony of dreams where I wanted to punch, where I had to punch to stay alive, and could not move a muscle until I awoke with a violent start and sweated and worried about what would happen again when I went back to sleep.

After the despair from a thousand desperate punches sent into the emptiness of the dark dreams, there slowly came into me a confidence as mysterious as it was strong. For every man that I met on the street, I would feel that he could be my opponent, and in my imagination I would see myself hurled at his figure in the ring. I would hit him with right hands that I did not possess, send him reeling sideways with powerful left hooks, and when there was someone who was too big to knock out, I would imagine using all kinds of fancy moves and boxing my way to victory, so that in all these fights I always won, and I never imagined getting hit. Let's say this is true of every fighter before his first fight. They are stupid, so inexperienced, they fear nothing alive. And when I climbed into the ring before the silent crowd, I had no fear. My fight was the first fight of the night and the crowd was anxious and I was anxious to show them just how well I could handle everything in my first fight. The bell rang, and out across the ring came another fighter with two clenched fists partly hiding his scowling face.

When a fighter wins a fight there are always elaborate explanations of just how the punch was thrown, just how he set up his man with two or three jabs, then how he feinted with another left and chopped his man down with a right.

When a fighter loses, there are just a lot of unanswered questions. There are great blank spaces, jeering numbness, yells of the crowd fading out and coming back in a rush. There are rubbery legs, and arms that won't do what you tell them to do. And leaving the ring there are legs that feel like they will crumble and leave you on the floor when your heart tells you to rush from the place in the plunging bitterness of defeat.

All the other fights came after my fight. I sat down a long time in the waiting room before I took a shower, trying to remember just what had happened. I did not really see any of the punches that hit, but I felt some of the first ones and from these I could tell that I got hit with right hands. A right hand tends to drive you back, to buckle your knees if its hard, while a left hook comes from the side at an angle and feels like it is going to rip your head off. A hook can buckle your knees as well as a right hand, but the buckling of the knees is not so obvious because your whole body tends to be driven sideways. There was a right hand that hit me in the center of the ring, and then a referee asking me a while later when I was on the ropes if I was all right. There was another right hand that

crunched into my nose. I could feel the whole thing crumble and then blood in my mouth and throat and all over my face.

In the second round there was a reversal for one moment, a rising hope and drive and a body too tired to press the advantage. It was a right hand that I landed as the other fighter was moving in. His legs crumpled when I pushed him away, and his whole body felt like rubber, but I was too tired to punch anymore. Then after two rounds the referee asked me what day it was. A doctor was there in the corner too. I said August. They all thought it was pretty funny, and I almost laughed too. The referee had been a champion, and thought I should stop. He said it was September, and the doctor said to stop the fight. That was how it ended.

In the waiting room I wanted to cry and puke, but I could do neither. My face was on fire and I held ice to my nose to keep the swelling down. From outside, the noise of the crowd came in great waves, rolling from the ring into the waiting room and flowing past to be followed by another wave of excited yells. After the most violent blast, two fighters would come into the dressing room, and two more would leave to go to the ring.

The winners came in smiling and shaking hands and getting slapped on the back by people who had some special interest in them. And the beaten warriors came in and said nothing. Some came with gashed eyes, others with no open gashes but large blue welts on their faces, and still others came in strangely unmarked. These came in stumbling along, staring off into space and mumbling incoherently. Their eyes were glazed, and they reacted violently to the bitterness of the smelling salts.

Many strangers came to me and talked. I did not want to talk and did not want their opinions or their soft words and kind thoughts. I wanted to run out into the night and feel cool rain on my burning face, and run, run, run as far as my numbed legs could carry me and then lie down in a cool green meadow forever. An hour ago I had wanted to win. Somebody's right hand came slashing from nowhere saying I could not win, and now I did not expect to fight again. The last man who talked to me said that I could win the next fight. What fight? There will be no other fight. I am going away. There is no time for the next fight.

My manager drove me back to the city. He was quiet on the way to the city, and the whole world was dark outside, slipping past the quiet hum of the engine and falling away into the mystery of the night. From the blackness of the country we came to the brightness of the city and then to the gray shadows of the streets by the gym. I was glad to be back by the gym, and I got paid eleven of the fifteen dollars that I earned. My manager was talking for the first time: expenses, you know, how do you feel, will your mother be mad, see you Wednesday. He drove away into the

city, and I walked away my anger with a long walk home in the shadows of the city. It was cool, but I did not feel good, and the little rain that fell on the way meant nothing.

I thought about how it would be the next day when everyone read the paper and found out about the fight. As usual, without saying anything, my mother would wash the blood from my clothes. I thought my old man would be mad and would rage to everyone else but me and that was good for both him and me but not the others because at the time I did not want to listen to anyone rage.

When I came home the old man was still up in the kitchen. He saw how my face was when I came through the door, and before I could get out of the kitchen, he called me back.

"Come here, Joe," he said, half looking over his glasses. I came back and pulled a chair out, but I did not sit down. I leaned the duffel bag, with the clothes and the bloody robe in it, against the chair.

"What do you want?" I said, knowing what he wanted and expecting him to start talking excitedly and not know himself half what he was saying. He got this way when he really had something to say.

"I want you to get a little sense into that God damned head of yours," he said.

"It's the wop, you know. It gets there slow."

"Well, maybe it got hammered in tonight. I can see you got hit a lot. You must be nuts. Cuckoo in the head," he said, pointing to his head, "or you're going to get that way if you keep this up."

"I might. You know, I want to win one."

"Win one, hah boy. Win one. You ain't got much sense, have you?"

"It's the family," I said. "It runs in the family."

I picked up some cheese and sausage. I ate slowly because my mouth was sore. My whole face was sore and I didn't feel like talking. The old man did, though, I guess.

"Well, God damn you, kid, if you fight anymore, you ain't living in the house. He said this all the time when we argued, and when anyone argued with him, even ma. "Me and ma ain't going to put up with it."

"You know, I'm going away in a week," I answered, feeling good.

"I ought to throw you out in the rain tonight," the old man said putting the cork on the wine bottle. He had not eaten any bread since I came in, and only drank the wine in his glass.

"The rain feels good, tonight, you better throw me out tomorrow." He was much smaller than me, and got too excited sometimes, and I knew he did not plan to throw me out.

"Drink some more of your wine. I'll fight some more, and you open the bottle and have more wine and cheese, and everything will be the

same. I'm going to bed," I said. He was getting ready to put the cheese away when I left the room.

I stopped in the bathroom to put some cold water on my face. It was light in there and in the mirror I saw that my face *did* look bad. I put some water on my face and tried to smile in the mirror. It hurt to smile and my face looked sick. I put out the light and went upstairs to bed.

The news of my defeat spread like magic to everyone in the family and to all my friends. For a day they talked about it amongst themselves, but never when I was around, and when I was around it seemed that they did not know what to say to me. They did not know whether to say they were sorry, or that I could win the next fight, or not to fight anymore, or to just talk about the usual thing: the weather, my old man's garden and hunting and fishing and school. I could not explain to them that I did not care what they said, and that I was going through a million fights just like before the real fight except that now I was losing each one and each one ended the same. I was like this for a long time, and they could not understand me.

Two days later, before I left home, I went to the gym after the fighters had left. The place was the same as always. It was not cold, but the wind had blown hard and I nailed the cardboard back up. The faces on the posters stared blankly from the wall, and I started from one end of the room and searched all the posters until I came back to where I had started. Chico's face was ugly. He was punch drunk. What right hand I had was the result of Chico's tutoring. Chico always repeated everything he said. It's gonna rain, gonna rain, gonna rain. I'm gonna win, gonna win, gonna win. Throw a right, throw a right, a right, a right, a right. He hit me one time sparring and hurt me, but he was a decent guy. See you. See you, Chico. Sammy had a head smooth-shaven, then. Punches seemed to bounce off his head. He always frowned and had a funny look. Got hurt in New York a while back. Never fight again, the arrogant son-of-a-bitch. See you, Sammy. Won't miss you, either. Sanchez. Now there's a real comer. He beat that tough little wop. Fast as hell. Has a real good punch, too. Weak chin? Maybe, I saw him dropped by a lightweight one time sparring. Got up real quick, though. Best of luck. Keep training.

Lots of luck to everybody. Oh, lots of hope. Lots of lucky punches, and gold and fame and glory.

I walked over to the speed bag and hit it with two quick punches. The noise jolted me out of my stupor. Then I hit the heavy bag three punches: a left jab, a straight right, and a left hook. I walked away, returned, and threw a right upper-cut that hurt my hand a little. In the mirror I saw my shadow. I posed and tried to look angry. It did not work, and I smiled and walked out of the gym.

COBBLESTONE

David Axelrod

Cleft from its natural bed
Squared roughly by shattering blows
Shipped to the distant city
To be pavement for the fleets.
Cobbler hobbling over cobbled city streets
Hustler rustling to clobber the eight
In the side pocket,
Three banks clop plop
Dung of filthy riding horse
A cop's and flops —
Cobbled alley bedroom for the
Hapless and the drunk.

"SEATED HARLEQUIN" BY PICASSO

Steve Jenkins

He thinks in pastel complacence.
In unsmiling happiness he ponders —
His folded hands, perhaps,
Or the whiteness of his nails.
What have you done, Harlequin?
What worlds have you conquered?

"The Three Who Cried"

by Steve Orlen

I saw the white chalk cross
That marked the ancient elms soon to be
slain;
No more to spread their green wings to
the sky . . .
Yet still death cannot break
The memory I take,
Nor dim the dreams I found in their sweet
song.

Douglas Gibson

He walked slowly on a cool July morning in the neighborhood where he had spent the first twelve years of his life. This was his first visit in many years. The place had changed a little. The spite fence between the Leahy's and the Ryan's had disappeared, replaced by a few rose bushes and a clothes line. Starched white sheets and lingerie billowed in the light morning breeze and played on the shoulders of two towheads earnestly shooting marbles. The "Peter-loves-Kathy" 's and the "Joe an' ?" 's, the wriggly delineations for hop scotch games and the childish obscenities were

still indelibly scrawled in chalk along the black tar sidewalks. The tiny, sun-browned children clad in jeans and t-shirts were even now beginning to spurt excitedly out of their houses to the singsong heralds of "John-nee" and "Georg-ee." It was a traditional chant. A prayer to usher in the morning. "Whatcha wanna do?" "Wanna go fishin'?" "Hey, j'a hear, Jimmy Hurley's got a new bat — a Musical one!" The names sounded different, but the faces were the same. They shone from mother's morning scrubbing, but the residue of hastily gulped breakfasts lay crusted in the corners of their mouths. There were freckles and pug noses, "elephant" ears and "devil's" ears, fat kids and skinny kids, crew cuts, and long hair falling in the eyes.

He stopped in front of the house which had been his first home and stared at the tall, three storied wooden structure. As he stood in the black cinder driveway watching the rays of the morning sun dance on the weathered clapboard a kaleidoscope of childhood memories tumbled in long, disjointed streams before his mind's eye. But something seemed wrong with the picture; something seemed to be missing. The red-brick ivied chimney still crept stolidly up the side of the house, and the same path was worn in the brown grass leading up to the sagging back steps. Then he realized what was wrong, what was missing. The tree. There was new grass where there should have been dark soil littered with broken twigs, there was bright sun where there should have been laced shadows darkening the side of the house. The ponderous tree, the majestic elm, the tallest on the block, dwarfing the large homes on Hillside Avenue, was gone, reduced to a fat unsightly stump. It was as if an integral part of his being, of his childhood, had been wrenched away from him. He looked with disbelief at the roots which stuck like severed arms into the grass. These had been his roots. The sap which had flowed through the now dismembered branches had been his blood, had flowed through his veins. He felt that the thing which had sired him and slowly, paternally, guided him along the painful, twisted paths of youth, had died. It was as though a trigger had been pulled in his mind (and the ensuing explosion) had blasted out some tiny rocks which were buried long ago and forgotten.

He remembered the skinny, dirty child with the vague, peculiar smile. He was sensitive, and quick to run to his elm tree, to withdraw and to cry alone. He would withhold the precious tears long enough to climb high in those protective branches, and then he would cry, silently, feeling the warmth of the bark against his face. He was far into the dream now, and thoughts, faces, swimming images swirled drunkenly in his head, dissolving the present into a mist of unreality: long-repressed incidents, disap-

pointments, fights, spankings, traumas, parental hypocricies, and finally the soothing beneficence of the elm.

He saw the huge figure of his father loom before the little boy in the darkness of the small bedroom. Behind his spectacles, his grey, imploring eyes were filled with tears. His first words were calm and soft, almost serene, as he sat, his shoulders bowed resignedly, on the chair across from the bed.

"Now tell me son," he pleaded, "didn't I always tell you you shouldn't steal? Haven't I taught you since you were old enough . . . God knows I thought you were old enough to understand!" His tightly clenched fists dropped, shaking, onto his knees. But the small boy did not understand. He sat limply on the wrinkled bedcovers, bewildered. He heard every word, but still, he could not understand.

He had seen a book in Ma O'Brien's store on the corner. The book was about fishing and had a colored picture on the cover of a shiny bass breaking water. He liked to go fishing because he could be alone, and no one would intrude upon him. Ma O'Brien won't really miss the book, he had reasoned. She has lots of money and anyways she's a good friend of mine and won't care if I only borrow it.

"It was one of my first rules. It is the eighth commandment," uttered the father contemplatively, almost as if he were talking directly to God. "I thought that I instilled in him not only the pride, but the obligations, the duties, which go along with being a Jew." Suddenly he drew his eyes away from the ceiling and glared down at the boy. "You are a Jew, you know, or have you forgotten this? Well . . . have you forgotten this?" The boy did not answer. He went on. "It is a right, being a Jew, and that means a duty. You should follow the holy scriptures, the words of God." His voice thickened, and became louder. He was trying to choose his words carefully, weighing each one before he spoke. "You should follow the words of God," he repeated, louder. "If people see that you are a thief, a crook, then they will say that all Jews are crooks. Your behaviour in this world reflects not just on me and your mother, but on your whole race! You are a Jew," he screamed, "and your name is Lopansky, and so help me God, you will not be a thief"! And in God's name, he stood up and struck the child violently across the face. He said no more, but pushed him face down into the bed and took down his pants. The boy turned his face on the pillow and looked up fearfully, as the large hand rose slowly and fell with the sharp crack of flesh on flesh on his backside, echoing in the small, dark room. Tears were rolling down the man's face, and his pale, thin lips moved rapidly in silent condemnation. The boy clenched

his fists next to his ears, and buried his face in the pillow. But he did not cry. The open palm fell again and again. He could almost feel the whole of his father's body shudder each time he struck. It seemed an eternity of pain to him, as he tensed awaiting the stinging blows. They stopped suddenly, and his father walked quickly out of the room, slamming the door behind him. The child's whole body shuddered convulsively, then relaxed on the bed. He vomited on the pillow.

He rose from the bed, fixed his pants, and tiptoed stealthily towards the door, listening for the voices of his parents in the kitchen. They had gone into the front room.

Calmly, he put on his sneakers and blue corduroy jacket, slipped his jackknife into the pocket, and opened the window, inhaling deeply the cool September night air. The screen unlatched easily and he climbed out of the window, dropping confidently the four feet to the ground. A soft, cool breeze chilled the warm sweat on his face. He ran quietly along the backyard path, the dew from the tall grass licking at his clothes, soaking his sneakers. He climbed easily to the long, low branch of the twisted apple tree, and jumped over the red-board fence into Mr. Bemis' dirt driveway. He peered cautiously around the corner of the barn and into the small cornfield which lay behind it. The field was deserted, except for the tall columns of dirty, yellow cornstalks — night sentinels which seemed to look sternly down at the small boy. The moon and stars were blanketed behind patches of murky grey clouds. He ran freely through the familiar twisted rows in the dark. He came to the squash and pumpkin plot, then through the fallow field. The shadow of his father seemed to chase him across the furrowed land. He ran over the cinder road, down the small embankment to the patch of wild blackberries where he often spent his summer afternoons eating the ripe, purple fruit and watching the bees dance and fly in the sun among the bushes. "They'll never get me here. I'll never go back," he thought wildly, his breath escaping in gasps, clouding the air around his head. He dropped down into a little ditch in the maze of thorny, twisted bushes, and searched his mind desperately for a plan. "Where can I go," he queried aloud to the maze; but there was no answer. His backside smarted from the licking, sending sharp quivers of pain through his legs. He stood up, shivering, and hugged himself. "I could go down to the river," he said aloud. "Geez, but the tramps are prolly there and they might kidnap me, or something . . . His voice trailed off to a whining whisper. He thought of climbing the mountain and becoming a hermit, going to his grandmother's house in Trobridge, or joining the Navy, but each solution contained too many unseen, lurking dangers. He

began to fret, glancing furtively into the twisted bushes. All of his newly-discovered freedom and confidence began to flow out of him. A burning feeling that he was going to cry rose in his throat and eyes, but he forced it down, and drove it back for the future, when he would again feel alone and secure. He jammed his hands halfway into his pockets. Suddenly, he jerked his head around, gazed intently into the darkness for a moment, then bolted back through the blackberries, catching his jacket and trousers in the thorns as he ran. He scrambled up the embankment, recrossed the cinder road, and ran back through the open fields and into the rows of corn, snapping the withered stalks in his haste. He ran frantically around the corner of the barn, grabbed the top of the fence and threw himself over into the blackness which was his backyard. He sprang up from the ground, brushed his pants, and ran over the hard, dark soil of the path. He halted at the lilac tree and peered through the dense branches to his bedroom window. The lights were out. He smiled, gloating in the knowledge that his absence had not yet been discovered. He crept silently around the side of the house to his elm tree. Sticking the flat of his frayed, wet sneaker in a crease, he grasped a branch and climbed nimbly up the five feet of sinewy bole to the dark crotch. He wrapped his arms around one of the main branches, and wedged one foot into the crevice. His heart beat rapidly in his chest. He leaned there like this for a few minutes, hugging the thick limb, catching his breath, his neck bent upwards, surveying the high, arched branches of the tree. The treetop moved in the wind, silently asserting its power to the world of night, and beckoning earnestly to the little boy to climb to the safety of the soaring, outstretched fingers. "Come up to the top, little man," it seemed to say.

A full autumn moon had come out from behind the filmy layer of clouds. The tree stood out starkly, bathed in moonlight. The boy ascended confidently through the serpentine branches, almost feeling the elm's energy being transferred to his body. This was his tree — his god — and in its mighty body lay his strength. He climbed higher and higher, far above the house and yard, almost to the top, where the branches bent and made an airy cage in which to hide. This was the sanctity and security of height; here he was free from the reproof, and the oppressing enigmas of the world below.

With swelling pride, he noticed that his initials, carved deep into the bark and wood, were still the highest in the tree. He clutched the initialed branch, balanced his feet precariously, and stretched his free arm. His rib cage was fully expanded, his head was held high. He gazed over the world from his Olympian height. The brown leaves wooshed in the light

wind, delivering crisp cacophonies to the sky. Roof-tops spread along the street below like bleak little islands of dark. A string of lighted poles cast monstrous, quivering, geometric shadows on the deserted streets of Elmwood. He felt like screaming — like he ought to have screamed — but instead, he began to cry, freely, and intensely, with his whole being. He threw back his shoulders as if to say, "This is my kingdom, and I can do whatever I please here." He had discovered the secret of happiness in solitude, and for this he was omnipotent. Here, he was a godhead, stretched out between the limbs, crying into the darkness, soaking the world with his knowledge of purgation.

He yawned, and sucked in the crisp, cold air of autumn. The elm and the night began to take back the strength which they had given him in the time of his need. He shivered. His jacket was open, and he was cold; he almost let go from his perch to zip it up. Slowly, tediously, he began to descend, to return to the heart of the tree, hidden from the wind and the night. He moved instinctively from branch to branch, feeling his way down the supple body of the tree. He crept deep into the dark, low crotch, wet with fallen leaves and dewy spider webs. He pressed his body into the warm, black bark as if seeking the very vitals of the tree. He leaned his face tight against the rough bark, feeling the creases imprint deep into his skin. He became one with the elm, and the confident tree-dweller was transformed once more into the sad, helpless little boy, prey to those oppressing enigmas of the world and his parents. He relaxed, his chin upon his knees, and lay, comforted by the moist warmth, drifting into sleep.

* * * * * * *

A lone, immobile figure sat rocking silently on the dark front porch of the house. She was staring at the elm, a wineglass silhouette outlined against the sky. Her slender hands were clenched into tight round balls in her lap. Stoically, with held breath, she endured the boy's ascent to the treetops, watched him perched ludicrously in his reticulated heaven, and finally, sighed heavily as he safely completed his descent to the low crotch of the elm. Her pretty young face was serene and tranquil. But there were tears in her eyes. She rose from the chair, and walked slowly to the base of the tree. She looked down at the boy, and smiled compassionately as he lay motionless, enveloped in the gnarled crotch, foetus-like, asleep.

I ASKED THE THEOLOGIAN OF FAITH:

David Axelrod

He was a man consumed —
Consumed by Scripture was he.
His words, in answer, echoed only;
Never did they touch on self-formed thought.
Tracing ancient words of beloved prophets,
He wove a circle 'round his questioner.

Seated by his side, one would be tempted
To touch that sound physique to prove him real.
The misty puffs of Bible, as in braille,
Scuffed between my fingers and my mind.
He was consumed and I could not retrieve
The smallest bone or piece of flesh,
Digested for his greater cause.

ONLY FOR THE WORLD

Lawrence F. O'Brien

Yesterday, I wept for the moon,
knowing her pain
is like blue whispers,
breeding ignorance . . .
in this valley of stars.

LOVE

Howard L. Shainheit

a too, too narrow bed
whose sheets rumpled
among floor-tossed blankets
and
    she
        and
            i
"ah, t'were sad to be dead"
that's what i thot
yet knew
that with
    she
        and
            i
                thots were death
                and we were alive

ZEN WEST

Howard L. Shainheit

To the belly of the bridge he came,
To that concrete vine — span of oblivion,
Last dreg of wine, unholy loss of name;
Came and stood, made ready to sin.

Laughed, laughed and screeched at the sky,
Crazily cursed man, God, the cosmos of mice
Who nibbled him a vine of die,
Who snickered the snake-eye of life's loaded dice.

He spat at the tiger, ached at the mouse,
Grinned the politician, poet, and priest,
Grinned a cold death's-head mask at the house
On the hill where life hadn't ceased.

Yet turned from that creeper to the red on the ground,
To a strawberry slipped by some child
Who in pensive joy passed luscious the fruit
Of the vine, the heart to a man.

Yet bent to the berry glistening in dust;
Put it to his mouth; — denied most's must.

Academic Survival in a Changing World

by Emile R. Drivila

My poor brother's final exams start next week and he, like most liberal arts freshmen, hasn't even opened a book. At ole Siwash he's a gagman undergraduate wenching and drinking through four glorious years of sublime irresponsibility. But he's in a death struggle with the brainy eggheads. All he wants is to hang on the passing end of the bell curve. Because my brother Bob is following my example in college, he came to me for advice on how to pass exams.

I suggested that first of all Bob should start attending classes again; as just before the strategic exam day, even the foxiest professor is apt to tip his hand a bit. But the ideas I gave him could be formulated into the following general principles:

The best reference material is previous final exams unless you can get a copy of the current one. If, when you read an exam through, and discover you can't answer the questions — don't panic, because actual course facts are of little or no consequence in passing the average liberal arts examination. Merely analyse each question carefully noting any and every fact that occurs to you on the same subject at any period of history; or totally unrelated subjects at the same period of history. I established the following facts in every examination I ever took, regardless of subject that in 1564, Michelangelo died, Shakespeare was born, the Magna Carta was 349 years old, and Galileo was but a babe in his mother's arms. I used to mention her maiden name in passing; it was Ammannati.

These facts are not so much building blocks, but are catalysts; given a deft touch they react upon each other and produce — upon first glance — a tight, well organized essay.

Once you've organized your facts, be sure to put the cream on top when you start writing. Many graders, after a few drinks, read the first couple pages with most care and judge the rest of the exam by these. It's also a good idea to memorize a few ten-dollar words like "dichotomy" and "exigesis," as well as whole sentences from books, which can be quoted, such as "Power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely."* I need hardly point out that it is far easier to memorize one sentence from a 784 page book on the rise of Jacobinism than to read it, and the effect on the grader is usually a good deal better. Every grader is a human being, impressions to the contrary notwithstanding. He reads hundreds of drab, dry regurgitations on a subject with which he is eminently familiar. So make your prose fresh — as interesting as possible, when you know what you're talking about. Throw in some amusing anecdotes when you have a chance: Sam Johnson never bathed, Lord Byron was afraid of mice, that sort of thing. This device must be handled with the utmost skill and taste. One laugh too many, one fanciful conjecture too many, and you will offend the scholastic mind, establish yourself irrevocably as a dilettante, and your delicate bit of spun gossamer will explode in your face.

Assuming that you've gotten through your first and best question with charm, organization and the clever relation of barely related facts. The second question can be a gasser. A typical question would be "What influence, if any, did the heated altercations over Darwinism have on the Pre-Raphaelite Poets, together or separately?"

In your check through the exam sheet you were probably unable to note down any facts at all except the names of three poets and that Darwin had something to do with origin of species. Success here calls for academic broken-field running at its best. Begin your discussion with a definite, opinionated and totally fictitious quotation relating to the exam question, from a totally fictitious authority; I would use: "According to Professor Hornthorst of Hamline College, Pre-Raphaelite Poetry is not a form — it is a frame of mind. To relate it in any way to other nineteenth century thought would be irrational if not foolhardy. One would do far better to understand this phenomenon in terms of ancient Greece."

You will then write a careful, well-organized essay — not on the examination question but on Hornthorst's chowder-headed opinions, which have been carefully designed to include an area of knowledge with which you are somewhat familiar, such as ancient Greece. Since you're not sure if your poets are Pre-Raphaelites, Hornthorst's got a few opinions here,

*Lord Acton: Particularly useful because it's the only thing Lord Acton ever said.

too, and you may stand or fall by them. The end result is that Hornthorst is blamed for all the lunatic ideas expressed, the grader chalks it off to misguidance on the student's part, and gives you a C+ instead of an F, which you would have gotten otherwise. This gambit is successful because it is positive and definite. It shows that the student knows what he is talking about.

Questions which can neither be handled by putting your best foot forward nor by using a fake reference can be overcome by making use of a dangerous — but effective — device: The smoke screen. When you hit "Discuss the eight principle characteristics of Swinburne's poetry, with direct reference to his work," use self-control and avoid panic although all you know is that he wrote a miserable poem "The Garden of Proserpine" which rhymes with porcupine. Go outside for a cigarette and upon coming back to your desk, switch from pen to pencil — Ticonderoga No. 6H are best — take a few deep breaths; and begin to write at top speed in a frenzied irregular scribble about anything and everything pertaining — or not pertaining-to the course. You could be accused of the most amateurish shovel work, but all your handwriting is illegible. The few words written carefully which are decipherable are called "indicator" words and are designed to indicate a logical pattern of thought apparently existing in the scribble. "Strophe," "tone pattern," and "caesura" are always effective. Having completed about ten hectic pages in this manner, go back over what you have written — or rather what you have not written — making tiny "clarifying" notes on the margin, connected to the main text by arrows whose shafts meander aimlessly back into the barnyard of hen scratchings. Other heavier arrows are tacked at the tops of several pages, pointing, for some mysterious reason, backward. You then add very legibly, "garden" and "Proserpine" and deducing that Proserpine was Pluto's wife, you write "Hades," "Charon," and "Styx." Then rally yourself for the final scrawl of "No Time," and in a supreme frenzy, hand in your examination twenty-five minutes early and run out of the room head in hands.

The grader will assume that the poor student, struggling with the mix-up of "Proserpine" and "porcupine" and with the ravings of Hornthorst, lost track of time, got desperate in the closing moments of the exam, and that his handwriting suffered accordingly.

If the smoke screen fails, the worst that can happen is what would have happened anyhow — a zero; but bet on getting the benefit of the doubt. And Bob, remember, I don't expect you to be a Phi Beta Kappa man like me.

PECHORIN

by Charles Dean

Pechorin, the title character of Mikhail Lermontov's *A HERO OF OUR TIMES,* is one of the most complex, most pathetic of Romantic heroes. First, we have Lermontov's assertion, in his preface to the second edition of the novel, that Pechorin is "a portrait of all the vices of our generation in the fulness of their development." How true this statement may be is a question that demands no little consideration from the reader, for within this question is the crux of the problem which faces us in assigning to Pechorin the traits of the Romantic hero.

We know that Pechorin displays many characteristic traits of the Romantic in great degree: he is egotistical, morbid, sensitive of his difference from others, and possessed of an infinite capacity for melancholy. But there are other characteristics of the Romantic hero which he does not possess, and those he does possess are mainly negative—with the exception of his sense of difference from others.

Because we feel that Lermontov has followed a process of building a character who is Romantic only upon reflection and through comparisons, we shall begin by treating the apparent lack of Romantic character in Pechorin before attempting to establish that, in actuality, he is a very Romantic figure.

One of the distinctly unromantic statements of Pechorin is the one of feminine logic in matters of love, which he cuts off with several dots for the avowed reason that "reason does not say anything more, and what speaks mainly, is the tongue, the eyes, and in their wake, the heart, *if the latter exists*" (Italics mine). "If the latter exists"! Certainly this statement is not that of a Romantic. And this impression is strengthened by the following assertion:

> "Out of life's storm I carried only a few ideas—and not one feeling. For a long time now, I have been living not with the heart, but with the head. I weigh and analyze my own passions and actions with stern curiosity, but without participation. Within me there are two persons: one of them lives in the true sense of the

> word, the other cogitates and judges him. The first will, perhaps, in an hour's time, take leave of you and the world forever, while the other . . . what about the other?"

These two statements, when combined with his act of killing Grushnitski (after giving him sufficient opportunity to withdraw his slanderous statements)—an act committed in compliance to the rules of social order—paint a rather convincing picture of Pechorin as a strongly non-romantic man of reason, whose statements and actions are often so coldly calculated as to be repulsive. And as if he were to lack enough cruelty to be completely contemptible to the superficial reader, Pechorin—in his statement of his philosophy of life—adds a statement that would be hard to escape in trying to avoid hating the man:

> . . . To be to somebody the cause of sufferings and joys, without having any positive right to it—is this not the sweetest possible nourishment for our pride? And what is happiness? Sated pride.

It would seem that Pechorin is a very hateful man. We are, however, inclined to disagree with this statement. We believe, rather, that he is a truly pathetic man.

Let us now turn to what we believe is the true character of Pechorin. The time sequence in this novel (which the translators discuss fully in their "Foreword") is essential to our understanding of our hero. In relation to his life the order of the stories is: "Taman", "Princess Mary", "The Fatalist", "Bela", "Maksim Maksimich". We should especially note that "Princess Mary", about which our discussion must center, is the second story in the novel. For we first meet Pechorin in the last two stories, in time, and then he leaves rather a bad taste in one's mouth. But this character, as we shall see, is a changed man after the events of "Princess Mary".

The strange involution of temporal sequence in A HERO OF OUR TIME is paralleled by an equally strange involution of characters. Maksim Maksimich is a simple, good man who lacks any great depth of perception. As Pechorin observes of him, he "does not care, generally, for metaphysical discussions"; and it is for this reason that, to Maksim, Pechorin—though charming—was a "little odd." These statements are indicative of the manner in which Lermontov is working. In his introduction, he makes the following observation:

> Our public life is so young and naive that it fails to understand a fable unless it finds a lesson at its end. It misses a humorous point and does not feel irony; it simply is badly brought up.

Let the modern reader take care that he does not fall victim to the same lapses in taste or sensitivity.

A connection with Maksim Maksimich is shown in Pechorin by his above statement of the man, for shortly before he has written of himself, ". . . I do not care to concentrate on any abstract thought." And this combination brings into play another relationship. Maksim Maksimich has said that he feels sorry for Efimich, the man who—in a moment of violence—has killed Vulich, the fatalist of the story's title. But Maksim observes of him that "this must have been what was assigned to him at his birth!" This observation echoes the statement of Maksim about Pechorin the first time he spoke of him (incidentally, in the same passage in which he speaks of Pechorin as "a little odd"): "You know, there really exist certain people to whom it is assigned, at their birth, to have all sorts of extraordinary things happen to them." We do not feel, therefore, that we are crediting Lermontov with too much subtlety in presuming to assert that, in reality, Pechorin is—like Efimich—a man possessed of strong emotional potentialities and "a decent Christian" (as his captain has called Efimich). It is another example of irony here that Efimich is captured and caused to be imprisoned by Pechorin, for he has done the same thing to his own Christianity.

The major character to whom Pechorin shows a number of affinities is the young officer-to-be, Grushnitski. Here, we must introduce the matter of tone in the novel. There is a distinct realism in "Bela" and "Maksim Maksimich". But in "Taman", the first story in Pechorin's journal, we are introduced to a strange, almost Gothic atmosphere, which pervades the whole journal (or at least, both "Taman" and "Princess Mary"; "The Fatalist" returns to the original realism to some extent). This falseness of tone is not left completely to the atmosphere. Speaking of a little blind boy, Pechorin himself introduces a belief that everything here is not quite real:

> . . . all of a sudden a hardly perceptible smile ran over his thin lips, and for some reason it made on me a most unpleasant impression. There was born in my mind the impression that this blind lad was not as blind as he seemed.

The atmosphere of Pyatigorsk is very false, also. Here, the falseness is in the people, who "drink—but not water, they walk little, they flirt only in passing, they gamble and complain of ennui. . . . They profess a profound contempt for provincial houses and sigh after the capital's aristocratic salons where they are not admitted." It is in this atmosphere of falseness that he meets Grushnitski, whose object it is, according to Pechorin, "to become the hero of a novel." Grushnitski is anathema to Pechorin because he is constantly "assuming a dramatic pose," due to his "fanatic romanticism."

Grushnitski is connected to Pechorin through a number of phrases which both use, at one time Pechorin consciously parodying Grushnitski. The most striking of these connections, however, occurs in two widely separated instances. Pechorin is describing what he believes Grushnitski did upon leaving for the Caucasus:

> I am sure that on the eve of his departure from the family country seat, he told some pretty neighbor, with a gloomy air, that he was going to the Caucasus not merely to serve there, but that he was seeking death because . . . and here, probably, he would cover his eyes with his hand and continue thus: 'No. you must not know this! Your pure soul would shudder! And what for? What am I to you? Would you understand me? . . .' and so forth.

This description is drawn disparagingly. But when Pechorin himself is departing from Mary for the last time:

> I stopped, with my hand on the door handle, and said:
>
> 'Forgive me, princess, I have acted like a madman . . . This will not happen again: I will see to it . . . Why must you know what up to now, has been taking place in my soul?[108] You will never learn it, and so much the better for you. Adieu.'

In the footnote indicated above (#108), the translators observe that this speech is "Another curious link between Grushnitski and Pechorin . . ." We find the connection not "curious," but essential to an understanding of the character of Pechorin. Quite simply, Pechorin and Grushnitski are two sides of the same character—Grushnitski, the insensitive man trying to be the Romantic hero; and Pechorin, the Romantic hero trying to be the insensitive man.

But this connection that I have drawn above may not be felt by some critics of the novel to be strong enough evidence to support such an assertion. Therefore, we shall attempt to establish this relationship more certainly. And to attain this end, we have only to examine the circumstances surrounding the death of Grushnitski and the aftermath of his death.

Grushnitski, who has wounded Pechorin in the leg, has now to face death at his hands. Pechorin knows that his gun was not loaded and requests his second to load it for him. At this point, Grushnitski's second —a man of reason—urges him to yield and apologize to Pechorin. He refuses and cries out to the man who has practically begged him to save his own life:

> 'Shoot!' . . . 'I despise myself and hate you. If you do not kill me, I shall cut your throat in a dark alley. There is no room in this world for the two of us.'

Now Pechorin fires. And he must, for Grushnitski has told the truth. "There is no room in this world" for the Romantic—he is forever outside looking in. Reason must rule. And as Pechorin goes down the trail to return to the false atmosphere of Pyatigorsk,

> . . . I noticed, among the crevices of the cliffs, Grushnitski's blood-stained body. *Involuntarily,* I shut my eyes.
>
> I untied my horse and set out for home at a walk: a stone lay on my heart. The sun seemed to me without luster; its rays did not warm me.

Nothing can warm him now—for his imagination, his Romantic spirit, is dead.

When he returns to his room, a letter from Vera tells him that—having heard of his duel with Grushnitski—she has confessed her love for Pechorin to her husband and is leaving. He dashes from his room and rides out into the wilderness. He rides so hard that his horse falls dead.

> . . . Worn out by the agitations of the day and by insomnia, I fell on the wet grass and began crying like a child.
>
> And for a long time, I lay motionless and cried bitterly, not attempting to hold back the tears and sobs. I thought my chest would burst; all my firmness, all my coolness vanished like smoke; my soul wilted, my reason was mute, and if, at that moment, anyone had seen me, he would have turned away in contempt.

With that final outburst, the Romantic in Pechorin is dead. In the final clause he is again conscious of the world about him, the world of reasonable men.

But that Romantic heroism of Pechorin does not die ignobly. Unlike Chateaubriand's René or Goethe's Werther, it will neither run away nor commit suicide. Like Stendahl's Julien Sorel, it dies heroically, hurling contempt and hatred into the face of that reason which would destroy emotions and love.

Another evidence of this intended identity between Pechorin and Grushnitski is seen in a passage quoted above:

> . . . Within me there are two persons: one of them lives in the true sense of the word, the other cogitates and judges him. The first will, perhaps, in an hour's time, take leave of you forever, while the other . . . what about the other?

This passage immediately calls to mind an earlier statement Pechorin made: "Presentiments never deceive me. There is no man in the world over whom the past gains such power as it does over me." And he has known Grushnitski in the past!

One other objection arises to making Grushnitski the "other side" of Pechorin: the constant reference the latter makes to the former's habit of "assuming a pose." Now, we may argue from within our position that Pechorin is also "assuming a pose." But there is an observation by Pechorin himself of Grushnitski which may serve to justify our position. He has not seen Grushnitski for some time, and he observes of the man shortly after meeting him again:

> . . . So often he has tried to convince others that he is a being not made for this world and doomed to suffer in secret, that he has almost succeeded in convincing himself of it.

It would not seem unreasonable to us to assume that, during the interval between their meetings, Grushnitski *had* "succeeded in convincing himself of it." And as that romanticism in his own nature could now, in its full strength, threaten Pechorin's reasonably constructed security in the world of men, it had to die.

Yes, Pechorin is "composed of all the vices of our generation." And the most atrocious of these vices is self-deception and annihilation of the spiritual self. But such vices have developed because the man has yielded his virtues to the demand of nineteenth century Russian society that a man, to be a success in life, must be false and vicious. He will never "fall on the wet grass" and begin "crying like a child" again. He will never again need to "concentrate on any abstract thought." And the loss is all his.

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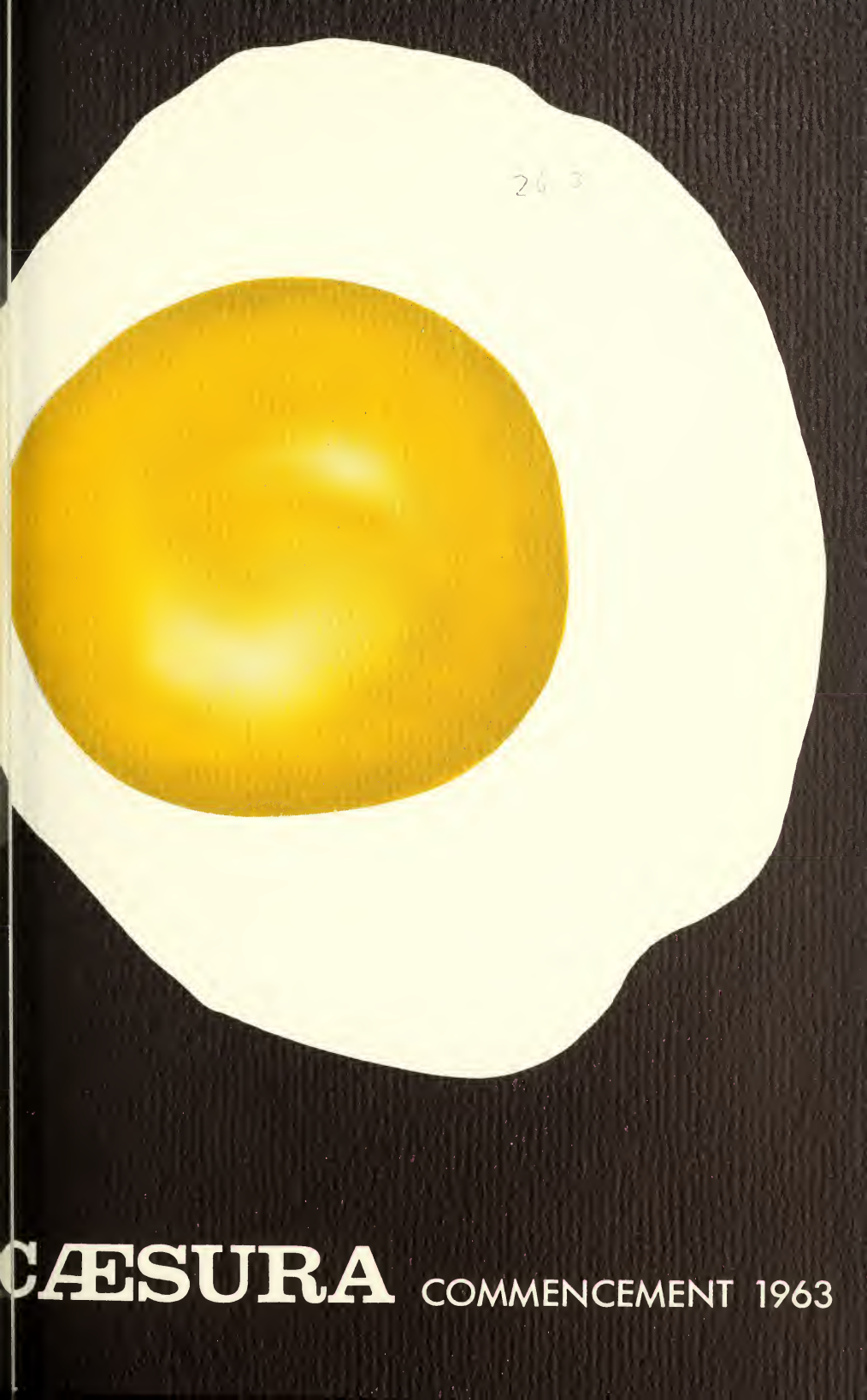

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Gentle Deeds, Gentle Hearts

Joseph Bradley

The dark, heavy-set man sat on the bench, occasionally shooting a furtive glance from side to side. Nervously, he fingered a greasy sack and tugged at the wide brim of his gray hat. Shoppers walking by eyed him suspiciously as he maintained his lonely watch.

Skipping up the mall came a little blonde child. She stopped a few yards from the man and hesitated. Suddenly, she began hopping on one foot to the bench where the man sat.

"Can I sit with you?" she asked, cocking her head at an angle and smiling syruply at him. Then, not waiting for an answer, she pushed up with her hands and seated herself on the bench.

The man ignored her for a moment, then said gruffly: "Little Girl, go avay." He looked straight across the street again and muttered angrily to himself, "I can not fail. The microfilm must be delivered." He turned to her again. "Please, Little Girl, please go avay. I got a mission to execute."

"You sound funny, mister," said the child.

"Yeah," he admitted, "for three years I lived in Brooklyn. Little Girl, please go avay. Listen. Your mother is calling you: 'Yoo-hoo, Yoo-hoo, Little Girl.' There, you hear her?"

"That was only you," said the girl. "Besides, my mother is shopping, and she told me to go to Tot-land while she shopped."

"Vhat's the matter you can't go to Tot-land? You got passport troubles? I can tell you about passport troubles — Vhy are you laughing?"

""'Cause you look funny. Can I have some popcorn?" she said, noticing the greasy sack.

"Popcorn? Oh, sure — No. I mean the popcorn iss stale. Vhat do you mean I look funny? Such children in this country. For them they *need* the revolution?"

"Why are you wearing that big hat down over your face? Don't you want anyone to know you? And that big trench coat, it's not cold out today."

"You ask too many questions, Little Girl. I got to vear it. Iss part of the job. Vhy does the soda man vear a little sign that says *Coke* on his shirt?" Vasily turned from the little girl and began to mutter to himself again.

"Oh, vhy does this happen to me? I been a good party member alvays. Like the time in Peoria when the little old lady said I looked like her Johnny, then picked my pocket with the secret documents. Such a nice old lady. Then I have to get this job in Boston. Iss too cold here. You think I could get assigned to Havana, or some place nice and varm, but no."

"But if you were in some place nice and warm, you wouldn't be able to wear your trench coat uniform," she said as she listened to Vasily's mutterings.

"Hmm, you got a point there. They probably got a summer uniform though. But somehow I wouldn't feel right without the trench coat."

They sat quietly for awhile. Vasily occasionally glanced up Tremont Street, looking for the contact. The girl sat swinging her feet under the bench, quite bored.

"Mister, show me a magic trick?" she asked.

"A magic trick? Iss so bourgeois. I can't do magic tricks. I don't

know how," said Vasily trying to put her off. "Oh, how do I get into these things? Vhy don't I listen to the party line, instead of getting sveated up with patriotism, and being a right-vinger."

What's a 'right-vinger'?" she asked.

"Somebody who can't help it," he said flatly.

"Aren't you going to show me a magic trick," said the little girl, pouting. "Or else I'll yell to that policeman over there." She pointed to a policeman on traffic duty, twenty yards away.

"So close I have to sit to a policeman. Oh, vell, if you be a nice little girl, I show you a magic trick. Look," he said, taking a book of matches from his pants' pocket. "See the metches? Now, I take one metch and light it, like so. And then I take another metch and light it, like so. There. I blow them out — Phoof — there. Two metches iss one metch with two ends and one head."

"That's magic," said the little girl with awe. "Show me how to do it. You're great."

"Naw, vas nothing. I do it at the embassy all the time. But little girls don't play vith metches. You might get burned."

"Please show me."

"You think it vas good, eh? Okay, you are a nice little girl. I show you. First, the metches. Now you do this," Vasily said as he struck a match. "Oops, the vind blew it out. Ve do it again."

Vasily struck eight matches from the half-empty book before the trick worked again.

"Now let me try . . . There. I did it too." She went off into fits of giggles. "I want to do it again."

"Nope, ve can't do it. No more metches. But you think it vas a good trick?"

She nodded. "Do you always sit here?" she said.

"No. Only vhen they don't have nobody else. I volunteer," he said, swelling his chest.

Silence settled over the two on the bench. Vasily moved uneasily as his bulk began to pain him where it came in contact with the bench. The girl began to swing her feet under the bench.

"Hey, mister, will you play jump-rope with me?" she asked.

"Jump-rope?" Vasily shouted. "You vant two hundred-forty pounds of me to jump the rope? Little Girl, are you for real?"

"If you don't," she said as she jumped off the bench, "I'll tell the policeman."

"Nyet." Vasily shuddered. "No. I jump the rope."

Vasily got up and took off his trench coat and hat and flung them on the bench. Then he carefully tucked the greasy popcorn bag into the trench coat pocket.

The little girl took a length of clothesline from her pocket, and handed it to him. Vasily walked a few feet from the bench. He swung the rope in a graceful arc above his head and brought it down swiftly. The rope wrapped around his ankles and sent him sprawling against the bench. Vasily got up slowly and rubbed his shins.

"Little Girl, I can not do this."

"But you were good, mister. You have to do it again."

"You think it vas good? Okay, I try again." Vasily swung the rope cautiously and gently skipped over the thin gray line. He repeated the maneuver, gaining confidence with each step.

"Hey, this iss fun."

"Can you do pepper?" she asked.

"Pepper, I don't think so, not on a bland diet."

"Look, I'll show you Mississippi," she said, taking the rope. She began to swing the rope violently, causing little puffs of dust to rise from the pavement.

"M-i-s-s-i-s-s-i-p-p-i," she chanted.

"Vait, I show you a new one," said Vasily, taking the rope. "Eeny-meeny-miny-Minsk, your-mother-caught-her-toe-in-Pinsk," sang Vasily as he skipped.

"Gee, that's a good one. I wish I could play with you every day."

"Vell, you can teach it to your little friends."

"I live in an apartment house where grownups live."

"Vell, maybe some other time. I got to stop now. Iss all out of breath."

Vasily mopped his forehead with the sleeve of his jacket, and sat down. He pushed his trench coat toward the little girl.

"Ve got to vait now, they vill be here soon. Then you can see me at vork."

Vasily resumed his former position, staring straight across the street, occasionally glancing to his left and right. Suddenly, two men emerged in a crowd pouring from the subway.

"Are those your friends?" she asked.

"Shh, you not supposed to recognize them."

"Oh."

The two men sauntered casually down the mall. Both wore tan colored trench coats and wide-brimmed gray hats. Both had their hands thrust deeply into the slit pockets of the trench coats. They glanced nonchalantly

from side to side as they walked toward Vasily.

"Who are they?" whispered the girl.

"The little one, five foot five, iss Sergei. The big one, six foot six, iss Andreovich."

"They look like Mutt and Jeff," giggled the little girl.

"Mutt and Jeff?" chuckled Vasily. "Yeah, that's funny. Mutt and Jeff in the funny papers." Vasily caught himself and remembered his assignment. "The time iss at hand," he muttered.

The two men were at the bench. Vasily stared straight ahead. The big one placed his foot on the edge of the bench, and rested his arm on his thigh. He stared out into space, but his eyes flicked alertly from side to side.

"Why don't you say hello to your friends?" she said.

"No. Can't do that," said Vasily tersely, "Got to vait for the passvord and challenge."

The girl lost interest in Vasily and his friends and began to swing her legs. Then she noticed the bag of popcorn in Vasily's trench coat.

Sergei reached into his breast pocket and brought forth a gaudy gold cigaret case. He held it out at arm's length. Vasily gave a curt nod.

"Hey, buddy, got a metch?" said Sergei, looking straight ahead.

"Yeah, I got a metch," said Vasily, not looking aside. He fished in his pants' pocket for a moment. "Funny thing, no metches. The little girl vanted a magic trick, so I burned the metches. Makes no difference."

"Vasily, not another Peoria. Please. So who's the little girl?" asked Sergei acidly.

"You being carping or something, Sergei. Vhy do you alvays pick on me? How do I know who she iss? She iss a nice little girl. Little Girl, vhat's your name?"

She swallowed carefully, then said loudly, "Maureen Bridget McGillicuddy."

"A foreigner, huh," Sergei sneered. "All right, Vasily, the microfilm."

Maureen sobbed a high, thin wail, and began to cry.

"Vhat's the matter, Little Girl?" asked Vasily tenderly.

"Vasily, iss no time to be play-daddy. Produce."

"Your nasty old popcorn," sobbed Maureen, "It hurt my tooth," she said spluttering the contents from her mouth.

Sergei leaned forward, his eyes bulging. Andreovich's foot slipped from the bench. Mutilated shreds of microfilm glistened in the sun among chewed bits of popcorn.

Vasily wept, "Don't cry, Little Girl. I buy you some *good* popcorn."

VISION

N. C. Bowlen

I shall leave the measured quarry holes,
A wind-swept bird, an albatross,
Above the mewing gulls and terns that screech
For fish heads dumped behind a trawler
With wings that curl as breaking combers,
Go seaward and seek the killer whale.
I am no Ahab nor Odysseus,
Though my ears are all unwaxed,
And the white one's secret is my shroud.
Neither Circe's drugs nor Lotus charms
Embalm me; not Ahab's creature I seek,
But his fate and knowledge when clinging
To its flank, he died the many instant deaths.
No doer of deeds I follow the sperm whale's spout
Around the northern stars until I find
A whirling hole descent. And there
The vengeful one consoles his one-eyed son,
Diana's priests forget the Golden Bough,
There Pequod's crew is joined to mourn
The one they left, the teller of the tale,
And riders for the Sign forget their Holy Grail.
My raft is ready, the winds are strong,
To follow west-bound clouds and find
A quiet rain-soaked coral island ring.

MARDI-GRAS

N. C. Bowlen

The pagan beat resounds between the streets
Of musty shops and mackerel stands;
It sets our window glass to rattling,
And shakes the potted lily stem.
The paper serpent traps on human feet,
Around the costumed carnival of masks,
And up the rows of greasy panes
The pulse beat throbs with every step.
The fat is in the fireplace,
The feast is on, the dance begins,
The players circle closer to the light,
And couples trade caresses in the dark
As ancient shadows pass across the walls.

THE ART LESSON

Douglas Flaherty

Under
star spangled sky
the young artist erected his easel
and began to paint
the nude virgin
seen through light that broke
from second story window.

And
in haste of heated love
that flowed
painted a ladder, not there,
and commenced to climb,
to climb, to climb,
and
f
e
l
l
star dazzled,
wet-brown paint
upon his hands.

PERUSAL OF A DICTIONARY

Douglas Flaherty

The lexicographer plays
words upon our vocal soul,
tampering with the very
heart-strings of reason.

Be judge to his symmetry:
a fist-full of syllables
pattern sense upon a word.
Peruse Noah Webster on
the browse to discover:

fish bowls your tonsils
in an opera glass
to whim the verve
sulphur fusion upon
a purple great.

Isn't language a subtle
muddle upon a blackened page?
So many words confound
the mind at rapid random
to laugh sensibility
out of season.

THE BRIDGE

by Sam Gorvine

Before the first world war, when I lived as a young girl in Russia near the little town of Dubrovna on the Dnieper River, I had three sisters and two brothers together with my mother and grandmother. There was much love but no further security because we were often hungry and there was no man in the house.

My father was far away in America. He had gone there to work in 1908, the year I turned seven. We were supposed to follow him soon, but "soon" did not come for a long time. We missed our father most on the Sabbath when other men were home, but worst of all when the boats wound slowly down the river in the late autumn. We would see them rounding the bend far up near cousin Donya's house and not know whether they were full of bandits who were known to shoot for no good reason, or Cossacks tending their pigs. The rest of the year we loved the boats, but in the autumn the Cossacks would bring their wheat and animals down the river from Smolensk to sell in Kiev.

It was a long slow trip, and if night were falling when they passed Dubrovna they would stop at the docks. When they got drunk enough on their homemade vodka, they would leave the boats and go shouting into the town looking for Jews to beat up. Since we were farther up the river from the town, they always pushed off at dawn and never came to our house.

I remember how I would get up in the very early morning when the mist would be rising from the Dnieper and the grass would be wet between my bare toes; and our one and only goat, Sosha, sweet milk and sharp horns, who later tore her stomach on a rusty nail and died; the winters were so cold that my legs would be numb when I went to the store with the little money we saved for tea and salt.

I also remember grandmother. We have a garden behind the house which she tended silently and lovingly. Her kindness was a bridge across hunger and suffering and her strength as enduring as the land she plowed with a rented horse.

In the winter when the snow would be over the windows of the house, and the children would stare with still-hungry eyes at their empty plates, my mother would dip the big spoon into her own plate and leaning across the table, give pieces of her potatoes to each of us until there was none left. In our selfishness and hunger, we would sometimes forget to say "thank you."

If Mother was kind she was also sometimes strict, but when a child had been slapped, Grandmother would come over and stroke gently the reddened side of its face, and then pat its head in the opposite direction the hair was combed. There would be much laughing and everyone would feel better.

On winter mornings when the wood in the big box by the fireplace was gone, Grandmother would put on her long brown coat and go outside to break off the small branches of trees that were as brittle as icicles. One morning as I was sweeping the floor after breakfast, I looked out the front window and saw her wrestling with a big branch of the white birch near the riverbank. When she was not able to twist it free she leaned upon it with all her weight. She hung there for a moment, her little feet completely off the ground. I heard the brittle "CRACK" even in the house and saw her fall in a heap with the branch. I went to the door quickly to call to her, and when I opened it I heard her laughing like a very young girl. Then she got to her feet and gathered the branches tight against her bosom and walked to the house small and bent over with age.

During the summer when the river would be low and sluggish from lack of rain, the boatmen would struggle along the river banks, pulling their heavily laden boats with ropes across their broad shoulders. When Grandmother would hear their song far up the river she would rush out the door and stand with her arms folded as they passed the house. Their backs would be bent with strain and they would fix their eyes on a tree or a rock a few feet up the river, and sing until they reached it. *"Ei-i-UK-nem, ei-i UK-nem,"* they would sing like the boatmen on the Volga. "Pull men, pull, to the bend, to the rock, *ei-i UK-nem, ei-i UK-nem."* They would seldom lift their faces from the ground and their voices, like their bodies, were thick and heavy with toil.

Sometimes all of us would join her outside to watch, and soon they would disappear around the bend below the town, their voices blown away by the summer wind.

In July, when the door facing the river was left open, moonlight would stream in and with it the sound of singing from the Dnieper. The peasants and townspeople would sit in their rowboats with homemade vodka and drink until the moon was high overhead, and there was always the sound of laughter mixed with the song.

In the evening before the sun went down, myself and my older sisters, Luba and Dora, would go down to the river to wash the clothes and the dishes. The red sun would still have warmth in it, but no matter how warm it got the Dnieper was always icy cold and good to drink.

I prefer to remember the good times in the summers when we would

follow our goat Sosha through the wonderful mud puddles, and sometimes one of the neighbor's pigs would join us. Mother did not get angry because we always washed our own clothes and did not track the mud in the house.

I remember once in the center of Dubrovna when Hifega had Ivanovna a disagreement with someone. Anna was very ugly and had a fiery temper, and when the insults began to fly and she could no longer express her feelings with words alone, she would suddenly turn her back to her opponent, and bending over, flip up her dress to expose her bare behind crying, "Putzelui maya sraku!" which means just what you think it does.

Word of the argument would spread throughout the town, and everyone came to stand around them in a circle and cheer. When Hifega's dress went up, there would be a roar from the crowd, and we children would jump up and down with delight, while the men laughed through their bushy mustaches and slapped their thighs.

But in winter when there were few potatoes, the arms of my brothers and sisters would get very thin. Once when I was twelve and little Abe was four, he was walking through the town and fell on his face unconscious in the street. A crowd gathered around him. I carried him home through the deep snow in my arms, but when we got there we had no food or medicine to give him until that evening when Mother came home from cousin Donya's.

There were also thin men who coughed much in winter and then they would spit. There would be a little spot of red on the white snow.

And then one spring, there was the *blocke*. Maxie, the oldest of the two boys, but four years younger than myself was trying, to become accepted by the town boys. He was a funny one, shy and uneasy with people, and did not get on very well with these boys.

We never found out what really happened, but Max came home one afternoon and did not eat, so we knew that he was going to be very sick. For four days he twisted in his bed, delirious, crying out and holding tight to Grandmother's hand.

When I went to the town to find what had made him sick, one of the boys told me with shame that they had made him eat the seeds of the wildflower which was called *blocke*. In America it is called the poppie.

On the afternoon of the fourth day Maxie's eyes closed forever and his hand fell away from Grandmother. That was the year the commissars came Dubrovna.

That year and the next, there were boats on the river filled with hard-faced men with guns across their backs. There was talk of bitter fighting on the Don, but there was little shooting near our town. We knew there was somehow no more Czar and that the commissars were the hand of

the Bolsheviks who now ruled the country. Everyone knew this and there was no trouble, except with the soldiers when they first went through our village asking all the men show the palms of their hands, and those men who did not have calluses on their hands were shot. We saw Israel Rubin, the tailor, being marched off, and he called to us, "Children help me, *sie geht mir shiessen!*" But we were only children and could do nothing. And when the soldiers went away other trouble came slowly, like the cancer in my mother's breasts.

The peasants who had always helped us mend the fence around our garden now had no time to help anyone who the commissars said could contribute nothing to the community. Our land began to waste, and the neighbor's pigs came and ate our crops. Though we could depend on doles of potatoes during the worst of the winter, we felt lost and the song of the boatmen held no more joy.

The doctor in Dubrovna told us that mother would have to go to Kiev to have the cancer in her breasts removed. We watched her sitting quietly in the boat that was to take her down the river, and she waved quietly to us when they pushed off.

I was sure in my heart that she would die, as I had been sure that Maxie would live, but a month later the measured tread and song of the boatmen brought her back to us, with only one breast.

We children grew surly and quarrelled frequently among ourselves and with the neighbors. Only Grandmother did not change. She took on herself quietly the burdens that my mother could no longer bear and was also the peacemaker.

With the coming of the commissars also came the new bridge near our house. In the summer of 1920 a gang of men came, and with their bare hands built a bridge across the Dnieper where the ferry used to be.

As they worked during the hot July days, they would sing much as the boatmen did but the songs of the laborers were full of words that made our young ears burn. The songs had rhythms so that the huge hammers with which they drove the piles always fell on certain parts of the words:

"OH HiFEga, TI telSTUcha . . ." "Oh Hifega you fat slob," and the song got worse from there, describing each part of Hifega and how fat it was. Hifega lived alone in a cottage farther up the river, and lived better than we did, but we could never understand why, because we children had never seen her do any work.

The bridge was built in a new way, very strong, but we did not have much faith in bridges because of a story that was told about Grandmother and her first born. To understand the story you must know the power of the river in the early Spring when the ice is breaking. Pieces of ice stand

on end like huge teeth in the jawbone of the river. They move with terrible power and on warm Spring afternoons the river roars and thunders like a fierce dragon.

In the spring of 1872, when Grandmother had been married only a year to my father's father, she left her firstborn, Solomon, who was only three weeks old, sleeping alone in the house while she delivered the *talisim,* or prayer shawls which she had woven for a rich rabbi who lived across the river.

Her husband had gone to Kiev to the funeral of a brother. In those days before the pogroms, there were many Jews in Dubrovna, and for most the trade was weaving, especially *talisim*. Grandmother crossed over the grumbling, tormented, river, with the warm Spring sun on her face. There was then only a rickety bridge and she had only to walk a half hour to unburden herself of the goods draped across her shoulders and then another half hour back to the house. It was a routine trip and she was not worried about Solomon.

But while she was at the rabbi's, the day grew suddenly very hot, and the grumbling of the river changed to thunder. When she returned to the river bank she found that the river had devoured the bridge so that now there was no way in the world to cross before the ice melted.

Little Solomon lay in his crib while Grandmother stood on the far bank watching the house. She had tried shouting across to passers-by, but they could not hear above the thunder of the river, and thought her mad.

Three weeks later, when the roar of the ice became the quiet rush of the flowing Dnieper, Kondrash, who afterward became Kondrash the ferryboatman, took her across and stood waiting on the bank while she ran up the path to the house. When he heard the scream from inside he got into the boat again and poled slowly to the other side.

By the end of 1922, when I was twenty-one, the fighting all over the country had stopped and there was some kind of order. On Tuesday, September fifteenth, while Mother was sweeping out the house after lunch, the postman came to the open door and handed her a long envelope. When we heard her cry out, all the children came running except for Luba and Dora who had been boarded with relatives because the harvest was bad and there was already too little food.

We rushed in the open door, Mother had her head on Grandmother's shoulder, weeping, and little Abe was unconscious on the floor. Grandmother was holding the opened letter in her hand, upside-down because she could not read, and shouting at mother to stop blubbering and read her the letter. But she could not stop crying because this was the first letter that had come through from Papa in ten years.

After the tears there was much rejoicing and Grandmother brought out, and set on the table, a bottle of wine that she had been saving for God knows how long. Mother read the letter slowly and deliberately.

We could see in the letter the quiet desperation of a man who writes without hope of being read, and the many letters before, saying the same things, and the many long waits for an answer that did not come.

He inquired about the health and happiness of each of his children, and we cried again when we realized that he did not know about Maxie.

We crowded around mother who sat at the big table with the lamp close and the rusty pen in her hand. The ink smelled of all the years it had never been used. There were loud arguments because we had so much to say and we were afraid that if we did not hurry the magic bridge would somehow disappear.

Finally in the midst of the uproar Grandmother's voice was raised and there was silence.

"We will go in order," she said quietly, and she began the letter "Dear Joseph . . ."

When she had finished her part, she pointed to Mother, and when she was done, to each of us in turn starting with the eldest daughter and ending with Little Abe. The letter was then sealed and Mother insisted on taking it to the post office herself so there would be no mistakes. Besides, she would have to stop at cousin Donya's to borrow the money for postage.

When she returned, Grandmother opened the dust-covered bottle of red wine. Each of us was given one of the best glasses filled almost to the top and there was a delicious sweet smell in the room.

After the glasses had been poured, my mother stood so that the space at the head of the table was vacant and lifted her glass.

"We will have a toast," she said and her face was happy. "To our crossing of the bridge to my husband and your father, Ephriam Yankev Baer Ben Yitzhok, to America, and to the New Life."

"Le chaim," everyone echoed, both embarrassed and touched by the pompous toast.

That winter was one of the easiest in spite of the bad harvest because there was a steady stream of packages from my father in America. Cocoa, chocolate, warm clothes, shoes . . . Oh those shoes! Father had been away for so long that he did not realize how big we were so that the shoes came several sizes too small. We who had never worn anything but rags and newspaper on our feet could not resist showing off in the shiny leather-smelling stiff shoes and soon paid for our pride with the biggest sets of blisters in all Russia.

That winter, I began to feel what it meant to spend the last winter

in the land of my birth. All through that season I played a sort of game in which I forced myself to realize that this would be the last time I would ever see or do certain things.

When the thaw came, I stood on the bridge and watched the river thunder beneath, making the iron hand rail vibrate.

I thought, "This is the last time I will see the Dnieper melt in the warmth of Spring." And I wept.

The letter which came in June of the following year held a bank draft for eight hundred rubles and the names of the places we were to stop on our way to America.

We crowded around Mother to look at the piece of paper which would have taken us, or anyone we knew, the best part of a lifetime to save. Even Grandmother was impressed.

"We must take the list of places to the home of Reb Lasher and see it on a map in one of his big books," said my Mother.

Reb Lasher was the teacher of the Yeshiva and the most respected man in the Jewish Community because he had saved enough to send his two eldest sons to America. He was a man of great learning and had great leather books filled with writing in many languages, as well as the new books full of maps and pictures which the commissars had given him to teach the children geography, which Abe said he taught well, and arithmetic, which he taught poorly, and the New Economics, which he did not teach at all.

We all wanted to go with Mother partly because the oldest of us had never been inside a real school, but mainly because we wanted to see the Rabbi impressed that such a large amount of money should be in our poor family.

So we hurriedly dressed, talking loudly and laughing much for we were very excited, even Grandmother.

Reb Lasher was not so impressed by the large amount of money; he'd had many surprises, he said, during his many venerable years on earth. I was surprised when he referred to himself as "venerable" but I supposed that he was.

He was surprised, he said, by the other side of it, namely the risk involved in transporting five children half-way around the world with no man to protect them.

At this, my two older sisters and I became angry.

"I am twenty-one and a grown women as are Luba and Dora who have each another year to my age . . ." I said, and would have gone on, but Reb Lasher raised a venerable hand silencing me and said:

"So much the worst for you, young ladies. For you do not know the more vicious ways of the World which as children you might be spared.

A man's heart warms to the plight of a young child quite admirably, and many lucky things come of it, but it warms to the plight of a "young lady" in quite a different way."

I blushed and murmured an apology to his great wisdom.

"We have protection," said the not so little Abe. "We have Grandmother."

"Ah, yes," he said, his voice more respectful, his eyes meeting hers. Grandmother could do anything. It was known throughout the town. He would say it was possible.

But he dropped his eyes from Grandmother's and said, "It has been told to me by my sons that it is the practice of the immigration officials to turn back as unfit all those over fifty-five. What could be done for a woman well into her seventies?" he spread his hands helplessly.

We stood there looking from Grandmother to him. Grandmother stood silent for a moment and then said, "It is as it should be. I cannot leave the house which my husband and his brothers built nor the land which has been ours for so long. I am an old woman and new lives are for the young."

She then began to put on her coat and shawl to leave, and seeing that we were too stunned to move, she threw Abe's coat on top of his head, saying, "Come, *noodniks,* there is much to do, and quickly, unless you want to make the trip through the blizzards."

All this time Mother had been looking at Reb Lasher as though trying to understand something, but she turned at last and followed the rest of us back to the house.

The next month went more quickly than seemed possible, and somehow as Grandmother worked with us at the endless task of packing and preparing, we forgot that she was not to go. On the last day in June when our bags stood everywhere in the house, and it was finally decided that we had forgotten nothing, there was a sudden silence and everyone looked at Grandmother.

"I am asking you once for the whole family, Mother of my husband, to go with us to the New World," my mother said.

"Don't forget now, children, I have packed five rolls of toilet paper in the brown valise; one can never tell about such things in a strange land."

Seeing that she was ignored, Mother was silent for a moment and then announced that she had made the arrangements with the captain of a boat leaving the docks at dawn the next day for the train at Smolensk. We watched Grandmother out of the corners of our eyes to see what effect this would have, but she only said that we were to get to bed early that night because tomorrow would be a big day.

Late that night, I lay on my cot in the big room where all the children

slept listening to their measured breathing and unable to sleep myself because of the excitement.

Once in a while there was a troubled cry from someone's dream, and once Dora awoke and we talked for a while. When it was very late I heard footsteps from the room where Mother and Grandmother slept, and in a while the footsteps, which I recognized as Grandmother's stopped in the middle of our room.

As I lay very still I heard her say softly in Yiddish, "My little birds, my little birds, where are you flying to?"

Then as the footsteps went into the other room, I thought I heard her crying, but I must have imagined it because Grandmother never cried.

In the morning when the sun rose red in my window, everyone was already bustling about, and I was shouted at for being so lazy. After much confusion, the door was shut behind us and with Grandmother carrying more than any two of us we scurried down to the docks in the town.

When we arrived, cousin Donya and a few other relatives were waiting to say goodbye, but it was late and the boatmen were in a hurry so there was no time to say very much. Everyone was crying except Grandmother who was helping Abe and me load the bags down into the boat.

At last, a boatman with a big mustache put a pole against the dock to shove off, and we stood in the stern of the boat with our bags scattered around us looking up at Grandmother.

"God keep you," said my mother, "We will write to you often, Mother of my husband."

"Goodbye, Grandmother!" we all shouted as the river began to carry us away. In the summer the river near the docks was deep and swift, so that the boatman walked easily on the banks, their ropes dragging in the water.

Grandmother waved slowly as the distance between us increased and all became silent watching her. When we reached the place where the river starts to turn and the river slows, the boatmen began to pull, little glistening beads of water leaping from the ropes as they tightened.

I could hear the creak of the timbers deep in the heart of the boat and the grunts of the boatmen mixed with their song and the water of the Dnieper reflected the grey of the dawn sky.

I looked back toward Dubrovna, and saw the bridge far up the river near our house, and the sun shining white off the whitewashed walls of the houses in the town. Grandmother looked very small standing there alone on the dock. I could not see her face but her head was thrown back and her eyes must have been closed as if she listened to the song of the boatmen.

Then we turned the bend below the town and I could not see her any more.

"Mandrakes" *Photo by* Don Crasco

"Figure" *Drawing by* Pamela Linden

"Design" ROBERT PERO

Collage — "Bottles" R. KALLSTROM

Sculpture: Cast Stone — "Lovers" DON GRANT

Lithograph — "Figure" PHYLLIS FORWARD

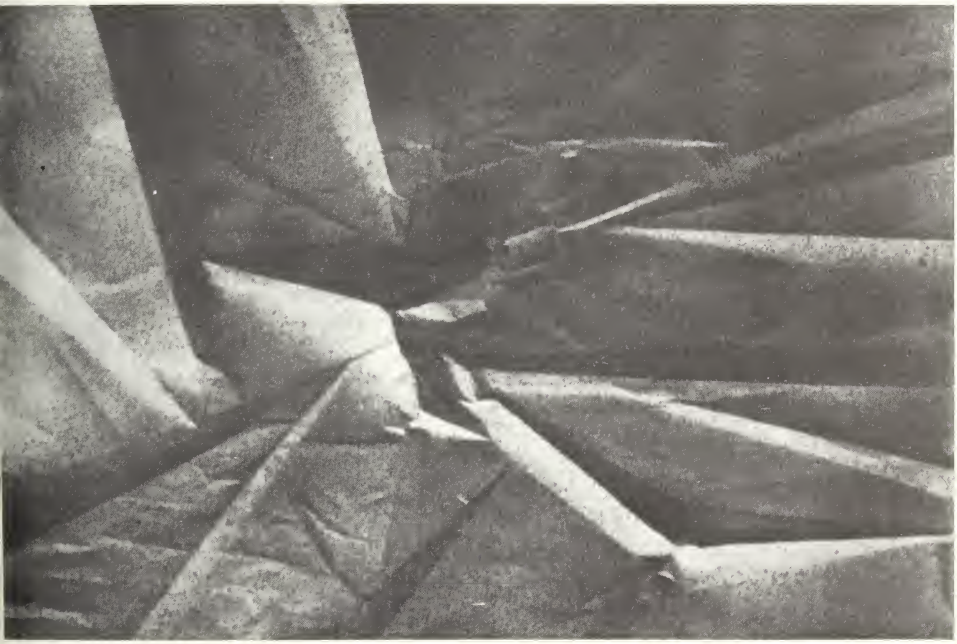
Sculpture: "Figure"

BARBARA KATZ

Lithograph — "Horses in Landscape" DOUGLAS GRAY

"Design" Robert Pero

Relief: Cast Lead — "Phoenix" J. Michael Egan



Design

Sigrid Johnson

Egg, "Pop-Art" *Sculpture by* ANN GUSTIN

SAVE HIM

Steven Orlen

Mother will you die?

Red-checkered heart of mine
no longer opens for the lily
of your hands.

Mother will you place your
fondle-doted warmth beneath
some riper green spruce tree.

Winnowed grain upon my forehead
no longer pitches to the spread
of your hands.

Bruised knees on the bloody of the earth
seeks spring freshets
to wash away the pain.

To save one grey man from dolor —
to keep from sleep
one half the man he was —
would take your all of sixty years
of weeded guilt
wrapped in the bell of one sweet kiss
and placed beneath his feet.

Mother will you save him?

MOMENTS

Steven Orlen

Oh to be where the grass ain't
And the trees stand naked in the park,
Far from fields and country hillsides,
Through ways of mouse-down dark.

No bitter crocuses to smile up the sun,
No bitter crickets to rasp their frightened
Feet in harping rhythms
While the sweating someone tosses at his bed.

There the wind is tucked into your pockets
And forgotten, rubs against your thighs,
There the rain is tacked up on the alley walls
And forgotten, fails to die.

THE SECOND FLOODING

Steven Orlen

Weave the cerements,
take fittings for the shrouds,
build the earthen monuments,
it's written in the clouds
for all to see that man gone mad
has raised the sword;

And when it falls, a blast
not heard since Noah took to ark
will damn the skies — the last,
for man has read the book
and knows a second time
no rainbow will be seen.

THING OF THE CROWD

Steven Orlen

What is this thing of the crowd
that steeps its sleep in the skin
of a timeless ape;

This thing that rides its life
on the hump of a white dolphin
fixed between the waves;

That casts its rigid gaze
on the white of the blue-skeined sky
to catch a thread of a thin-sliced moon —

By whom do we judge this mannikin voice?

BLOOD RED

Douglas Flaherty

The short bald man in baggy red swim trunks ran along the yellow beach towards *Sylvester's* refreshment stand. A dire thirst clogged his throat. As he ran, his flabby, sunburnt belly palpitated like a gently bouncing beach ball. Tufts of long black hair swept back along his ears accentuating a sunburnt bald track in his cranial mid-section, appearing to the imaginative bystander as two ashen forests separated by a red river. Occasionally the little man gently flicked a small particle of scaled, dry skin from his pate with his skinny left index finger. He ran more swiftly now, the torrid sand was burning the bottoms of his snow-white feet.

——Damn, but it's hot, he said to himself.

Sylvester saw him approach and bent akimbo over the counter, assuming a countenance of paternal beneficence.

——A man your age should know better, Sylvester admonished.

——Gim'me a tomato juice, the bald man snapped, ignoring the waiter's platitudes.

All lines of communication between the two men melted. Sylvester scowled at the sharp command and began pouring.

——Here you are, Mr. Crantz, to your health. He slid the red liquid across the counter top.

Crantz picked up the glass, gulping the contents in a single toss.

——God, that's terrible! he yelled at the waiter.

——Make your own if you don't like it, Crantz! Sylvester shouted. Make your own!

Crantz turned redder than the sun. His beach-ball stomach pulsated crazily. He was not a man who conversed at great length, an argument was against all reason, the bald man mused. The necessity of arousing his voice contorted his mind. He was being terribly humbled he thought.

——Damn, if I can't make better juice than that! He turned abruptly and ran back down the yellow beach.

——Then go make your own, Sylvester yelled after the fleeing man. Crantz had forgotten to pay, he was beside himself with vermillion rage.

II

It was not long afterward that a little bald man pushed open the squeeking screen door of *Randall's Grocery*. Two flies made a hurried escape as their prison door was boldly opened. Crantz hurried across the sawdust floor. Particles adhered to his swollen bare feet. He stood before the grocery shelves with one foot upon the other vainly attempting to abate the sting from his infernal experience on the beach.

——May I help you? Mr. Randall queried, noting the perplexed state of the little man.

——One gallon catchup, one quart tabasco, one tin pepper, one box salt, Crantz intoned in the manner of a precise physician dictating a prescription.

——Right away, Mr. Crantz, responded the tall, gaunt grocer with an air of urgency. Having a group outing? Randall queried in a neighborly tone.

Crantz saw no need for response. His task transcended mundane conversation. The bald man, deeply engrossed in his project, merely mumbled as he handed the grocer a bill and disappeared, forgetting his change.

——Mr. Crantz, Mr. Crantz, your change! the grocer shouted after the fleeing man. Crantz was oblivious to all. The door was opened allowing the same two flies to re-enter. Perhaps life on the outside was not what they had anticipated. Crantz held his grocery bag taut and ran along Virginia Lane.

——Damn! if I can't make my own, Crantz shouted inwardly. He turned off Virginia Lane into Wasteland Road where the houses were similarly built, shingle front, cellar-less boxes. Crantz recognized his home. A wooden facsimile of a human hand hung on a post by the entrance. Mrs. Crantz, professionally known as Madame Blavatski, was a clairvoyant. French had always been incomprehensible to the bald man. He merely alluded to his wife as a mind reader which humbled her status considerably in the eyes of many Tyndale citizens.

Crantz possessed none of the Madame's prophetic qualities. He unprophetically and inadvertently scuffed his blistered feet on the wiry welcome mat, sending forth oaths which even Madame Blavatski could not conjure in her most mystic moments. His cry of anguish set all dogs in the area to wail in sympathetic vibration. Crantz cursed again. With his free hand he opened the combination door and stepped inside.

——I'll make the best damn tomato juice in the whole gall . . . juicier, spicier, deeper flavored, darker color. His promises floated skyward like a child's bloated soap bubble.

His self-promise of fulfillment reached a crescendo and fell abruptly as he reached the kitchen, slamming the door behind him. Madame Blavatski sat in flowing, red robes before the television set. She was scarcely cognizant of her husband's *grande* entrance and solemn vow. The television blared on.

The Madame, like all professional people of merit, ordered gross upon gross of calling cards. Hers was of an exceedingly high quality, heavily embossed gold on white with ripple edges and read as follows:

MADAME BLAVATSKI
Clairvoyant, Ltd.
389 Wasteland Rd.
(*At the Sign of the Hand*)

The mixture of Polish surname, the curious French allusion, and a hint of her being under charter to the British government confused her patrons and ear-marked her as something profoundly mysterious if not even saintly. Her little bald husband merely shrugged his shoulders when confronted by patrons inquiring into her technique of occult prowess. He knew very little concerning his huge, pudgy, red-faced woman, but one thing was certain, she had never left Tyndale in her life. He believed that her chartered title carried with it no more than a subtle hint of his wife's limited ability as a clairvoyant.

During the evenings, she read palms and conducted séances, calling forth the spirits of dead citizens of Tyndale. All unanswerable queries concerning the deceased citizenry were brought to Madame Blavatski:

Monday evening

——Did Ezra Penguilian forgive me for appropriating his land? the guilt-ridden town selectman asked the Madame.

——Hush please, I see a form before me . . .

Tuesday evening

——Is Mrs. Regan happy now with her son? Rained the day of the funeral. Of course *you* know.

——Hush please, I see a form . . .

Wednesday evening

——Is it true Gretta Randall had a lover? Miss Watson asked the Madame, her eyes shining green like a kitten's.

——Hush please . . .

Spirits appeared and disappeared before the view of the Madame, for only she could see them. Her husband went about his business, never interfering in her calling, scarcely spoke to her; it did no good, she belonged to another world.

Daytimes the Madame sat alone in her front parlor before the television. Antenaes projected from the receiver at forty-five degree angles, absorbing frequency waves too prophetic for any human reception. Madame Blavatski gazed at the screen, forecasting the outcome of the little, human dramas unfolding before her eyes. Chintz curtains impregnated with moon beams adorned the parlor's three windows. Deep woven bamboo mats C.O.D. Singapore caressed the floor, wall to wall.

III

A quart beaker brimming with cold water sat majestically, surrounded by catchup, tabasco, pepper, and salt in the middle of the maple kitchen table. The bald man, not allowing himself but a moment to change out of his red baggy swim trunks, bent low over the table in a manner suggestive of an eminent scientist about to save the world. His flabby, red stomach pulsated like a pot-bellied stove gone mad.

——I'll make the best gall damned juice in the world, Crantz stated as if mesmerized by the commands of diabolical intercession.

He poured two cups of catchup into the beaker. In his frenzied haste, Crantz neglected to draw off the top of the brimming glass vessel. His experiment flowed over the sides flooding the table.

——Damn! the little man shouted. I'll have to be more systematic.

He cleared, cleaned and set up the operation anew on the maple table top. Crantz hurried to a file cabinet, extracted an index card and grabbing a dulled, number two pencil, sharpened it between his yellow-black teeth.

Crantz began to tremble with excitement. His feverish head flooded with blood in anticipation of ultimate success. He dashed out in bold block letters a formula which he believed would revolutionize the tomato industry. Immediately a vision of a thousand square miles of rotting tomato fields locked itself firmly in his mind. His formula read as follows:

CRANTZ'S TOMATO JUICE

5 gallons cold water	1 tin pepper (black)
1 gallon choice catchup	1 box salt (iodized)
1½ pints tobasco	

Add ingredients to water,
Mix well, draw off, drink — Yum!

Crantz's formula immediately became operative. The little man dashed to the cobweb bedecked cellar where buried behind the potato bin, abounding with sprouting vegetables, the bald man rummaged a five gallon water bottle. He smiled now, the cold cement tickled the nerve endings of his bare, blistered feet. The pulsating stomach and pounding, blood-filled head never abated its rhythmic cadence.

——Best gall damn juice or bust! Crantz yelled, lugging his prize bottle to the level above. He washed the bottle lovingly as a mother would a child in a basin. Crantz positioned it affectionately on the table and began to fill the vessel through a rubber tube leading from the tap. The television blared from the inner room as the Madame transcended the ethereal, losing herself in prophetic-like predictions concerning the drama of life unfolding before her view through her crystal ball.

——God bless the installment plan, she mused amidst her celestial contemplation.

Crantz never heard the sounds, his rational powers were transfixed by his creation in the kitchen.

——Made with a little bit of love, the bald man shouted in a state of anxious frenzy. Judiciously the catchup was poured, followed by the tabasco, salt, and pepper.

——How to mix it? How to stir it? Crantz queried himself.

It was impossible to ask the Madame. She was in another sphere; besides she had never spoken to the husband since the day she had received her *Certificate of Clairvoyance Excellence,* special delivery, Chicago, Ill. The blessed day was five years ago. "Blessed," the bald man reasoned, because she *had* offered a direct threat to his security. Madame Blavatski was of superior height and weight. Often he had fallen victim to her amazonian prowess. But that was five years ago. She had never hit him since; it was below her calling.

Such thoughts were now farthest from his mind. Crantz found a solution to the mixing problem. He disconnected the hose and inserting one end into the blood red solution, blew profusely through the remaining exposed tube end. The fluid swirled with great rapidity. Released air bubbled through the solution, emitting little popping noises at the vessel opening. Crantz danced with glee.

——Jug-a-juice. Jug-a-rum-a-juice, the dancing man sang. Ha-he-ha-ha-he-he, Crantz laughed. A little man ran for a glass.

——How to get the juice out? How to get it out? he asked himself. Crantz's mind worked double time. Ciphen juice out! he exclaimed amind a burst of interior plaudits.

The rubber hose was again inserted, lowered to a level below the table. Kneeling on the spatter-paint, asphalt-tile floor, Crantz physically ciphened the blood-red liquid into a six-ounce tumbler.

——Jolly-glass-a-grog-a-juice! Crantz prophetically exclaimed.

Remaining in a fixed, kneeling attitude, the bald man tossed his blood-swelled head back in anticipated reception of the fluid that was to revolutionize the tomato industry. He tossed off the brew as if it were a thimble-full. Crantz cringed in despair.

——God, that's terrible! he shouted. Numerous strong oaths broke from his burning throat, escaping through quivering lips. Crantz had failed.

He arose painfully, gazing at the abortive fluid before him. Rage penetrated to his bone marrow. The palpitating stomach altered from crimson to geranium pink. The blood had been pumped upward through his chest cavity, seething into his cranium, filling every duct, artery, vein, pounding desperately against the walls screaming for escape. The little bald man failed to sense the pain of blistered feet. Every drop of blood in his stoggy frame appeared to have lodged in his head, precipitating a stasis. His mind ran rampant with a desire for destruction.

——Destroy! Destroy! Cranzt shouted, running from the room. Madame Blavatski, her gaze set fixedly on the drama unfolding on the screen failed to perceive her fleeing husband. The world of the occult was too much with her. The man bounded up the stairs to the second landing. He located a twelve-gauge sawed-off shotgun behind a Sears-Roebuck chicken incubator stored in the master bedroom storage closet. This was his first entrance into the room in five years; he perpetually slept in the guest room since the Madame received her certificate. Crantz located a shell and nervously slid it into the gun's magazine. The man, bounding down the stairs, swept past Madame Blavatski with enough gusto to rustle slightly her red flowing robes. She never once cast a glance upward from the screen. Crantz reached the kitchen and stood before the monstrous vessel on the table. Blood continued to bloat the bald man's head.

——Destroy! Destroy! he shouted again.

In a saner moment, given to contemplation, he would have labeled himself a brave man, perhaps the bravest man in the world. But it is pride which leads man to the diabolical abyss of total destruction. The blood continued to pound against Crantz's head, screaming for escape. He leveled the gun and released the trigger.

BLAM! ! A tremendous explosion reverberated throughout the house. Madame Blavatski never once gazed from the screen as the blood-red liquid ran down the kitchen wallpaper onto the floor.

TWIN TRUNKS

Howard Shainheit

into twin trunks of muscled gray
three feet above the sandy ground
a huge old tree had forked to say

fear nature's split in wind and rain.
six feet above the sandy ground
two sad old men ran iron chain.

Sunday-people drive quick-by
or stop to breathe, admire the tree
pondering will it crack and die.

eating the wonder of possible knit
i, too, pause to admire the tree
know full well it will never split.

OBSERVATIONS

David Haracz

A ragged ruffian crow
Walks slowly across the littered courtyard,
Picking bits of scraps among the shadows
Cast by taller buildings.
From behind the smudged windows
Sun-starved eyes in hollow faces
Follow his wanderings.
He cocks his head and stares sidelong at humanity.

CONFORMING TO PATTERNS

David Axelrod

Once there were wild flowers
That grew in patches
In meadows and fields,
And then man came
And put them in green houses,
    glass houses — cages;
Sheltered them and bred them
    and hybrid them;
Made them more colorful
    and perfect
Only to be cut
And placed in cheap plaster vases
    where they would die.

At least there are still some wild flowers.

David Axelrod

Aged and hardened,
Dwarved by youths,
He stands in old blue suit;
Wide faded tie, bold design
Attesting to once-stylish manner.
Slumped a bit, yet
With that look of permanence,
He sways a reverent
Cadence to his prayers.

Mouthing ancient script
With practiced swiftness;
Pouched cheeks pulsing
As each word is touched;
Lifting hand to chest
As in atonement;
This, disciplined tradition
For his God.

THE BURNED HOUSE

Susan Tracy

So many children once
Lived in this house, overran the garden.
I knew them, I was there. Now
The house is lost.
Appletrees, asters, honesty, elms
Overwhelm the ruins.
They cling together, shaking
Under the tidal wave of vines
Dragging them down.

The blighted pear trees are growing
Over remnants of past,
The rotting nails.
And even the brook's long silver snarl
Is tamed now: smeared into swamp
By all the dead years.

THE OLD KING

Susan Tracy

Crowned with savage jewels and dark gold,
He stares out fiercely, from forgotten age.
A flower's in his hand; his face is old,
And scarred with ancient sorrow, former rage.
The eyes are proud still — did he rule as king
Of timeworn northern islands? Still the same
Unbroken silence; his stiff hand makes a ring
Around the flower; we do not learn his name.

I see him as a ruler in the North,
Now stiff with years, remembering old days:
The blue spring, when his dragon-ship went forth
On journeys westward — he sees where he stays.
The redbeaked dragon-ship lies cold on shore,
Sea-rotted timbers. He will sail forth no more.

EXECUTIONER

Susan Tracy

A venomous smell of ether bites the air.
I drop the cotton in a plastic bag,
Tie off the top, and leave the frogs to die.
How they beat against the sack
With little hands! They leap
Struggling for air.
Through the transparent film,
Frantic, they watch me move
Redhaired, enormous, in the outer world.

Presently, red mouths open.

LOVE COMES ON LITTLE CAT FEET

Judith Dickstein

Love comes like a small cat,
he decided,
creeping up on padded paws,
then leaping,
sharp little claws imbedding.
But she could not agree,
and laughed at him,
he trying to explain.
And while they fought and spat
it pounced upon them.

STEPHEN CRANE: A PARALLEL WITH GREEK LYRICISM

Douglas Flaherty

Published in 1895, Stephen Crane's poetry was rejected by readers and critics as well. The reason is understandable: he was a good two decades ahead of his time. Having no known background in the Greek lyrics, he borrowed rather, from the Christian Myth and contemporary epigrams. To these disparate elements, Crane added an acute vision of himself and the world to achieve a direct parallel, in theme and often content, to much of the ancient Greek lyrics. By way of introduction, it should be stated that Crane, as well as his Greek predecessors, wrote from deep personal emotion giving their work an authentic stamp of purgation, as if the very flesh of life had been burnt away exposing the bone and the hidden meaning.

As Amy Lowell stated concerning Crane: "he touched life too curiously and tenderly, his reactions were too bitter, his sensitivity too avid, for him to remain for ever the onlooker, the recorder of men's lives." Miss Lowell sums her criticism by stating that "He (Crane) ranks in America somewhat as Chatterton ranks in America. A boy, spiritually killed by neglect. A marvellous boy, potentially a genius, historically an important link in the chain of American poetry." But Crane is anything but a "link" in the chain of American poetic succession. He stood alone in the 1890's, and the *Atlantic Monthly* said no more than that his poetry was composed of "strange little lines" which "are not even rhymed, and have but a faint rhythmic quality."

Crane's break with the traditional poetic form, coupled with his often epigramatic line and bitter irony did not sit well with the temper of the 1890's. If Crane is to be considered as an exponent of any school of poetry, then he best fits into the long succession of lyric poets who wrote from the 8th century before Christ down to the present. Crane is not unlike Archilochus (circa 680-640 B.C.) who was one of the first to exploit his own private personality as a subject of poetry. Archilochus still belongs enough to the heroic tradition to feel that his own honor and his own feelings are of paramount importance. He speaks for himself, not for others, and in this respect he anticipates the chief feature of personal monody.

> Thou art my love,
> And thou art a priestess
> And in thy hand is a bloody dagger,
> And my doom comes to me surely— . . .

Archilochus was the wandering soldier whose motto was: "War is my birthplace." Crane's association with war was equally if not more repre-

sentative of his life and art. Crane's preoccupation with war does not limit itself to *The Red Badge of Courage* and two volumes of collected tales of the Civil War and the Spanish-American War. The theme of war is to Crane's thinking, instrumental in all activities of man. As a naturalist, Crane viewed nature as indifferent: "She did not seem cruel to him then, nor beneficient, nor treacherous, nor wise. But she was indifferent, flatly indifferent." It is the correspondent in "The Open Boat" who notes this indifference as he and three men row for their lives amid the onslaught of menacing waves. This theme, a battle for existence against the backdrop of an indifferent nature, is also reflected time and again in the poetry of the Greek lyricists.

Daniel Hoffman, a major Crane critic, sheds light on the characteristics and themes of Crane's poetry which directly parallel the poetry of Archilochus and his circle of contemporary lyricists.

> He (Crane) stood apart from society but it was always present for it was at odds with inner man. It is this inner conflict . . . man, god, war, love . . . which makes Crane the great lyricist.

These themes will be the heart of the forthcoming comparison of the Greek lyrics and those of Stephen Crane, beginning with an analysis of man. It is necessary to examine man under the poet's microscope before a discussion of his encounter with god, war, and love.

II

As previously mentioned, Crane viewed man as a naturalistic creature living amid the backdrop of an indifferent nature. In such a background of futility it is impossible for man to control his own course of action, for there are no powers working in his favor. At best man must rely on his own limited powers to battle his way past each day's encounter to emerge, not the victor, but at least equipped for the ensuing predicament. The futility of man's existence is portrayed in this poem from Crane's *The Black Riders.*

> I saw a man pursuing the horizon;
> Round and round they sped.
> I was disturbed at this;
> I accosted the man.
> "It is futile," I said,
> "You can never —"
>
> "You lie," he cried
> And ran on.

Similar to Crane's statement concerning the futility of action leading to nothing but a vain pursuit of the horizon is this fragment from Archilochus.

"Erxias, where is all this useless army gathering to go?" Although this reference to military action is greatly limited compared to the cosmic view of futility offered by Crane, it does contain a more futile statement of life than the modern reader can appreciate.

In the time of Archilochus, and especially before him in the great period of Homer, warfare was the chief means of a man proving himself. War was a pageantry in which man rose to defend his lineage, his *ethos* and himself. For Archilochus to find futility in such a "noble" venture is to be dispondent with a whole mode of life. His rejection of the traditional view of the futility of the "useless army" has almost equal footing with the cosmic futility of Crane's man "pursuing the horizon" as if he were attempting to find pageantry in life.

III

The individual can best relate futility to the universe if he notes this quality in his own individuality, thus proceeding from a particular to a general rule. Palladas, a Greek lyricist of the 7th century relates his existence and ultimate death in these terms:

Naked I reached the world at birth;
Naked I pass beneath the earth:
Why toil I, then, in vain distress,
Seeing the end in nakedness?

Palladas sets up a parallelism to demonstrate that "nakedness" stalks him from the womb to the tomb. His conclusion is an inevitable question of why toil if total existence is one of futile nakedness and "vain distress." Crane supplies a similar theme, approaching the subject from the aspect of a "darkness-light" theme as contrasted to Palladas' theme of "nakedness-distress."

I was in the darkness;
I could not see my words
Nor the wishes of my heart
Then suddenly there was a great light—

Let me in the darkness again.

Crane saw the *light* but it was not that which conventional religion preaches to be the truth: the light of the Christian God which affords salvation. Crane twists the religious theme of light around to serve his ironical ending, perhaps a view of life, as he saw it: a world of indifferent nature as was noted in "The Open Boat." If this be the light, then Crane wants no part of it; the darkness affords a kinder refuge.

IV

To both Archilochus and Crane, god was no benevolent father but a menacing giant who "smote little men at his ease." Archilochus spells out the problem when he states that

> To the gods all things are easy . . .
> . . . but often . . . when men stand planted on firm feet
> these same gods will knock them on their backs,
> and then the evils come
> so that a man wanders homeless, destitute,
> at his wit's end.

Archilochus does not threaten the gods or suggest a panacea. He appears neither in the cloak of the insurgent nor the pleader. Crane approaches the same problem of the power of God over man, but his answer is one of blasphemy, brave taunts, and sarcasm.

> Well then, I hate Thee, unrighteous picture;
> Wicked image, I hate Thee;
> So, strike with Thy vengeance
> The heads of those little men
> Who come blindly
> It will be a brave thing.

This poem serves as the extreme of Crane's views of a Creator, and more importantly from an analysis of his art, points to his great talent for treating a similar topic with equal polarity of emotional feeling. The God who was a "wicked image" in 1893 became a God whom the "little pebbles" sang ballads about in an 1897 poem. Archilochus was likewise skilled at blaming the gods for their tricks on man or praising Zeus for his great justice.

V

War to the ancient Greek was a display of bravery, an opportunity for the individual to defend his lineage and ethos. Tyrataeous sings praises for the hero in his verse

> Noble is he who falls in front of battle
> braverly fighting for his native land, . . .
> Naked he lies where youth were better lying —
> sweet-flaw'rd youth were better lying,
> Grown men regard the young women desire them —
> fair in life, in noble death still fair . . .

Perhaps never before has death been portrayed as such a joyous experience. His mania for the "fair in life, in noble death still fair," is perhaps true sentiment, although to the reader, it smacks of a perverse sense of no-

bility. Crane's treatment of war in his poem "War Is Kind," is strikingly similar, but we cannot help but feel that Crane is being ironic about soldiers "born to drill and die."

. . . . . .

Swift blazing flag of the regiment
Eagle with crest of red and gold
These men were born to drill and die
Point for them the victory of slaughter,
Make plain to them the excellence of killing
And a field where a thousand corpses lie.

But although Crane was obsessed with war, it is reasonable to assume that the poet who described the Bowery existence of the 1890's as a haven for those who "fought in the mode of four thousand years ago," envisions in the above poem a symbol of the battlefield-of-life. With such an interpretation it obviously follows that man *is* trained to die, for once man is born, he invariably follows one path, and that path is to eventual death.

VI

A subject treated almost as violently as war is that of love. Most lyricists of ancient Greece, and Stephen Crane as well, treat love as a sorrowfully passionate experience. It appears that unhappiness in love is more easily expressed in poetry than the joyous aspects. Archilochus portrays love in these terms:

Here I lie mournful with desire
feeble in bitterness of the pain the gods
inflicted upon me,
stuck through the bones with love.

The need for love expressed here goes far beyond mental desire, becoming a passionate physical agony. Archilochus employs no trite expressions of heart-ache or fever. His is an expression of desire in concrete terms, not mystical longing. Granted, he commences his verse with an expression of "desire" and "bitterness," which are subjective feelings, but when he sums his distress by localizing the infliction, describing it as a physical malady, he renders a concrete image. In this manner, he affords the reader a visual impact of the affliction which allows no room for sentimental feeling. Crane likewise demonstrates the ability to render a concrete image of the mental experience of ill-fated love.

. . . . . .

Crane proceeds one step further than Archilochus in his physical description of the effects of love. The "priestess" in Crane's verse holds a "bloody dagger" which has already performed its tortorous mission, while Archilo-

chus continues in pain, being "stuck through the bones" with no hint of being alleviated from the pain. Sappho, like Crane and Archilochus, reflects the sorrowful aspect of love in physical terms, but her description of love as a "monster bitter-sweet" introduces a technique which the other two verses lack: the realization of the ambivalence of love: its bitterness and its sweetness. Sappho expresses, with the force of a single image, her dire plight.

Love has unbound my limbs
and set me shaking,
A monster bitter-sweet
and my undoing.

But Sappho does not brood, as many sentimental poets, over the mental tortures of love. Love becomes her "undoing" as truly as if she had been "stuck through the bones," or stabbed with a "bloody dagger." Crane's undoing by love is in keeping with his philosophy of life. Hoffman explains Crane's view of love by stating that "love of another sinful creature (to Crane) was an ideal to be affirmed despite the coldness of God . . . An ideal code not only of devotion, but of loyalty. This code is not easy to live up to, for lover and beloved alike are menaced by their fallible nature." This "ideal code of love" theme is strangely akin to the code of Sappho in her relations with the girls entrusted to her for the purpose of training in the arts of dance, music, and song. Sappho's deep love of her girls was more of a "code of love" than a mere teacher-pupil relationship. To the lyricist, the values of life dominate their very being and life also affords them the means to perpetuate their ideals: either through their disciples or their works.

The lyricist whether he was an ancient Greek writing 2500 years ago or a modern successor, continues to wield the final word when it comes to explaining his simple passions or cosmic views. To the lyricist belongs the unending tradition of explaining himself and the world to man.

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